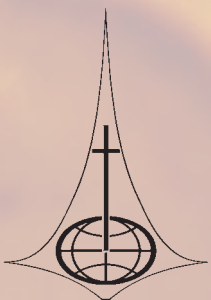




LWF ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY  
Stuttgart, Germany, 20–27 July 2010

# **Give Us Today Our Daily Bread**

## **Official Report**



The Lutheran World Federation  
– A Communion of Churches





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## **Official Report**



**THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION – A COMMUNION OF CHURCHES**

Published by  
The Lutheran World Federation  
Office for Communication Services  
P.O. Box 2100  
CH-1211 Geneva 2  
Switzerland  
E-mail: [info@lutheranworld.org](mailto:info@lutheranworld.org)  
Web site: [www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)

**Parallel editions in German, French and Spanish**

Unser tägliches Brot gib uns heute! – Offizieller Bericht  
Donne-nous aujourd’hui notre pain quotidien – Rapport officiel  
Danos Hoy Nuestro Pan de Cada Día – Informe Oficial

**Editing, translation, revision, cover design and layout** by LWF Office for Communication Services

**Other translation, revision** by Elaine Griffiths, Miriam Reidy-Prost and Elizabeth Visinand

**Logo design** by Leonhardt & Kern Agency, Ludwigsburg, Germany

**All Photos** © LWF/Erick Coll unless otherwise indicated

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Printed in Switzerland by SRO-Kundig on paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council  
([www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org))

ISBN 978-2-940459-08-7

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Congregants at a 23 July eucharistic service. © LWF/Ratna Leak

# Foreword

## General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko

The Lutheran World Federation's Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart in July under the poignant theme, "Give us today our daily bread," will be remembered not only as the second such global Lutheran event in the land of the Reformation, but also as a significant symbol of a memorable ecumenical event in the life of the Church of Jesus Christ.

We committed ourselves to care for God's people and for God's creation. Our spiritual eyes were lifted up and our hearts were stirred by the insightful keynote address of the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and the two respondents Ms Jeanette Ada and Ms Inga Marie Nordstrand.

One of the preachers, Rev. Shu-Chen Chen of the Lutheran Church of Taiwan, communicated an urgent call for a sharing of the bread of life with the *world*. For such to happen, new tables of hospitality need to be set in such a manner that

all may eat and celebrate responsibly God's gifts intended for all. This urgent reminder by Rev. Shu-Chen Chen was issued against the backdrop of a global situation where priority is given to allocating funds amounting to USD 860 billion to rescue the banks, but the world's nations secure only USD 123 billion for the development of poorer nations. And there are many other challenges that remain in our hearts and minds:

- The number of people living with HIV and AIDS continues to grow while only 42 percent of those in lower and middle-income countries who need treatment have access to it.
- Women and girls still struggle for justice in the Lutheran Communion and in the wider world.

- Those who are least responsible for climate change often suffer the most from its consequences.
- The people of Kenya have been the victims of 28 droughts in the past century, and four in the last decade alone.

I invite you to read these pages of the official report of the Eleventh Assembly. Pray and reflect on the decisions and commitments made by the official representatives of the worldwide communion of Lutheran churches gathered in Stuttgart. We were a community of followers of Jesus Christ in the Lutheran tradition, representing millions of Lutherans around the world as we recommitted ourselves to the transformative acts of receiving and sharing. We acknowledged that we have received God's gift of life and therefore must share life with those who travel with us on this planet. We as human beings are called to be stewards of God's creation, to have a "dominion" rather than a "domination" relationship with the rest of creation. We are called to put in place mechanisms of nurture and care for the physical and spiritual wellbeing of all.

In this regard we reiterated our commitment to gender and intergenerational justice, food justice, climate justice, fairness toward those suffering from HIV and AIDS, justice for migrants and relief for those who suffer under the draconian conditions of illegitimate debt. As the message of the Eleventh Assembly reminds us, daily bread means "everything included in the necessities and nourishment for our bodies such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, farm, fields, livestock, money, property, an upright spouse, upright children, upright members of the household, upright and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, decency, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors and the like." (*Small Catechism*)

Additionally we committed ourselves at this Eleventh Assembly to speak out boldly and prophetically across ecumenical lines and with communities of other religious faiths.

One defining ecumenical event during this Assembly was that of reconciliation and healing between Lutherans and our Anabaptist sisters and brothers. Through a liturgical action we asked for forgiveness from God and the Mennonites for the wrongful and unacceptable persecution and execution of these reformers during the early days of the Reformation. The Lutheran reformers Martin Luther, Phillip Melancthon and others approved such actions

by state authorities. The service was a moving moment experience expressed in gestures of rich spiritual significance; The Mennonites as the inheritors of the Anabaptist tradition have shown much grace in accepting our apology. But our relationship with this peace church should not remain static. As my counterpart Larry Miller, general secretary of the Mennonite World Conference, says in these pages, both of our communities are in need of healing and forgiveness. This action of reconciliation and forgiveness serves as a model for true reconciliation among churches and across faiths.

Finally, I want to say how grateful I am to our host church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg for seeing us through the two weeks of sessions and the many years of planning and logistics. It was a gift to return to the land of the Reformation after 58 years. We are in your debt. I also must mention the many volunteers from churches around the world; our ecumenical guests, who continue to enrich our witness; my colleagues in the Geneva secretariat; and all the many participants at the Eleventh Assembly. They have given generously of their time and talents.

I have had the privilege to serve the LWF for 28 years and six months, the last 16 of which I was in the position of general secretary. During this period I was, in different roles, involved in organizing the LWF Assemblies of the years 1984, 1990, 1997, 2003 and 2010. The last three of these five Assemblies I organized as general secretary. During these years I have come to the conclusion that every Assembly is a landmark and a milestone in the life of communion of Lutheran churches and in their ecumenical journey. Therefore the official report of every Assembly is an essential document through which were are accountable to the Church, today and tomorrow. I consider this official report not to be a record of "old" events, but a living testimony of how God works among God's people who share a common self-understanding that inspires them to common action. This is a very important legacy document by and through which we give account to our spiritual posterity.

As the message of the Eleventh Assembly reminds us, "In a time of 'grabbing and keeping,' we once again become aware that true humanity is found in receiving and sharing." May the gifts offered at this Eleventh Assembly offer yet another model for us as we go about the ministry that Jesus evoked in his prayer, **"Give us today our daily bread."**

God bless you.



ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

# The LWF from Winnipeg to Stuttgart

## Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson

“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the world” (Rom 1:8).

We begin this Eleventh Lutheran World Federation Assembly echoing Paul’s words of thanksgiving for your faith and your proclamation throughout the world. Let our voices be raised in prayers of praise and thanksgiving for the Holy Spirit’s work in and through the Lutheran World Federation.

It has been a great joy and privilege to serve as LWF President the past seven years. During this Assembly, we will have the opportunity to express gratitude to Dr Ishmael Noko for his exceptional leadership as LWF general secretary. I have learned so much from Dr Noko’s theological wisdom, his leading the LWF to a deeper expression of communion

while remaining focused on our participation in God’s healing of the world.

I ask you to join me in thanking all who have served in leadership the past seven years—especially the LWF Council, Executive Committee and advisors, those who serve in the secretariat in Geneva and those who serve the LWF throughout the world. For each of you and the 140 LWF member churches, I say thanks be to God.

### A NEW CREATION IN CHRIST

In my report to you I have chosen to invite you into a conversation that will build upon Dr Noko’s excellent report “From Winnipeg to Stuttgart 2003–2010,” and prepare us to engage the theme of this Assembly as it will



be developed in the keynote address by His Grace Archbishop Rowan Williams and addressed in worship, Bible studies and village groups.

This conversation continues one in which we have been engaged over the past seven years. The Council has shaped the conversation and the renewal process has given it focus. The conversation is about our self-understanding as the Lutheran World Federation.

I am not suggesting that we turn inward, becoming preoccupied with our own identity and survival. Rather, I believe our self-understanding is for the sake of being turned outward toward the world God so loves. In fact, I believe attentiveness to our self-understanding is not for our own sake, but for the sake of the Good News of Jesus Christ and for the sake of the life of the world.

What shall we say about our self-understanding as the Lutheran World Federation? Or more accurately, how do we reveal to one another and others who we are? Permit me to share my observations.

### EVANGELICAL

Our self-understanding as the LWF is inseparable from the clarity of our proclamation. Throughout the past seven years, I have asked repeatedly, “What gospel are we proclaiming?” It may seem an unnecessary question to some, but it is not, for there are competing gospels. Some attractively offer prosperity to those who live in poverty. There are gospels that say the way to salvation is through personal morality, acts of charity, political action, pious devotion or right doctrine. Yet for us, it is from the gospel’s transformative proclamation of the new creation in Christ that our self-understanding comes. “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ” (2 Cor 5:17–18).

Did you hear that? Do you believe it? The new creation in Christ is not just patching up old differences and covering over old divisions, but then leaving intact the fundamental assumptions and systems of power and privilege that leave us trapped in these systems of domination and exploitation and alienation, trapped in a house of death.

The new creation is a completely new thing in Jesus Christ. It is the full dignity of our baptismal life in Christ. We are a liberated resurrection community, sent to bear witness in word and deed to the new creation in Christ.

Our self-understanding comes from the transformative proclamation of the gospel as Paul declared it. “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:19–20).

The good news we proclaim and believe is that Jesus would rather die than be in the sin accounting business. It is this transformative and liberating gospel that echoes throughout the 140 LWF member churches. “For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Gal 5:1). That is the good news we proclaim to those living enslaved by systems of domination and exploitation. It is the good news of Jesus Christ announced to those whose dignity has been stripped away and to those who live immobilized by fear and guilt.

In Christ you are bound to be free—free from the powers of sin, death and the devil. The new creation you are in Christ leads to a life of faith in which reconciliation is the work—the vocation—God’s mission in which we are engaged.

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message

## DAY ONE 20 JULY

On arrival in Stuttgart, Assembly participants registered at Stuttgart’s Liederhalle Culture and Congress Center. They gathered at 3 pm for the opening eucharistic service in the city’s historic Stiftskirche, where LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson preached and German Minister for Finance Dr Wolfgang Schäuble addressed the congregation on the Assembly theme. The Eleventh Assembly was officially opened at 6 pm (Plenary I).



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of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor 5:18–20)

## SACRAMENTAL

Our self-understanding as the Lutheran World Federation begins in and flows from our baptism into Christ, in whom God is making everything new. Joined to Christ and his death and resurrection, through the means of grace—Word and water, bread and wine—we are joined to a community of radical inclusion.

“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:27–28).

At the table of the Bread of Life, there is bread for all. Regardless of who people are and what they bring to the table, everyone receives the same gift—the body and blood of Christ—no more, no less.

The credibility and clarity of our proclamation has profound implications for our life together.

Where the Eucharist is “properly” practiced, Luther teaches, it creates a community of people engaged in public life on behalf of the common good, especially the good of the vulnerable. The communing community is “changed” into a people who attend to human needs. They “help the poor, put up with sinners, care for the sorrowing, suffer with the suffering, intercede for others, defend the truth.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, *Public Church for the Life of the World* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, 2004) 16–17. See Martin Luther, “The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ, and the Brotherhoods (1519),” in *Word and Sacrament I*, Luther’s Works, American Edition, Vol. 35 (Philadelphia and St. Louis: Fortress and Concordia, 1955–86), 35:57.

Yes, this is our self-understanding—given to us by God through Christ.

## CONTEXTUAL

But let us be even more specific. With this proclamation at the center of our self-understanding, it means there will be a particular social location to our vocation as the LWF. That social location was foundational to the LWF’s beginning as a response to those who had become refugees during the Second World War. Since our beginning as the LWF, we intentionally have stood with those who live on the margins of society.

In Bonhoeffer’s words, seeing “from below, from the perspective of the outcasts, the suspects, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed and reviled, in short from the perspective of the suffering” is “an experience of incomparable value.”<sup>2</sup> Yes, our self-understanding calls to us to seeing and participating in the world from a particular perspective.

That particular social location to which we as the LWF are called varies throughout the world. In India, it means dedication to accompanying the Dalit people as they struggle for liberation in an oppressive caste system. For those living with HIV and AIDS, it means we will accompany their confrontation with systems of discrimination and marginalization that deny their human dignity and access to affordable treatment. It means standing with Palestinian Christians who seek to maintain a vibrant Arab Christianity in the midst of occupation. That location calls us to stand with indigenous people in their struggle for self-determination. It means walking with our brothers and sisters in Haiti for years to come as they travel the long road of rebuilding their nation. We will stand with

<sup>2</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Vol. 8 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 8:52.

Banners bearing the Assembly theme, “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread,” welcomed delegates to the Assembly venue – Stuttgart’s Liederhalle Culture and Congress Center.



women who confront patriarchal systems of power and privilege and who, along with children, resist human trafficking that recruits or coerces them into situations such as sexual slavery, forced labor or child soldiery.

When civil wars destroy villages, leaving people to wander in search of safety, we will be present establishing camps for internally displaced persons. When the fighting stops, we will accompany people in the long process of reconciliation that begins by speaking the truth to the perpetrators of the violence—the truth of human suffering, death and destruction. From South Africa to Liberia to Sierra Leone, we have learned that reconciliation is inseparable from speaking the truth and from repentance.

Yes, during this very Assembly, we will bear witness to this self-understanding by speaking the truth of the destructive attitudes and actions toward Anabaptists by Lutherans. We will repent and ask God and our Mennonite sisters and brothers for forgiveness. We look forward to a reconciled and renewed relationship in the unity of Christ's body.

Such an act of repentance and reconciliation is not a one-time event for us as the Lutheran World Federation. It belongs to and flows from our self-understanding as a new creation in Christ sent with a message and ministry of reconciliation. It will bring confrontation with forces that divide humanity, that deny dignity, that destroy God's creation. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu wrote in *No Future without Forgiveness*, "Forgiving and being reconciled are not about pretending things are other than they are. True reconciliation exposes the awfulness, the abuse, the pain, the degradation, the truth."<sup>3</sup>

Sisters and brothers, in our polarized world in which the divisive voices of religious extremists seem to dominate, let us as the Lutheran World Federation continue

to engage in what just may be the most courageous of all prophetic acts—the act of reconciliation.

### COMMUNAL

Being a new creation in Christ, sent with a message and ministry of reconciliation, will shape our life together in the communion of the LWF, as well as our proclamation and service in the world.

In his greeting to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Dr Ishmael Noko recalled the 1957 LWF Assembly under the theme "Christ Frees and Unites." Following a world war and experiencing the tensions of the Cold War, relations between and among Lutherans were marked by suspicion. Dr Noko reminded us that Lutherans were not even able to share the Lord's Table with "easiness." Dr Noko said:

Yet, it was in the midst of all those doubts, suspicion, and fears among them that the Lutherans rediscovered anew what unity means. That true unity is a gift. It is a gift rooted in the proclamation of the Gospel and in the celebration of the sacraments. This gift is God's own work. And our hands are to serve that unity. They understood that we, therefore, cannot use our hands to pull apart God's costly work.

In light of that rediscovery, our forebears in faith decided to do the most sensible thing to do under those circumstances, and that is to stay together. They did not forsake one another. They did not anathematize each other. They understood that the Church is the body of Christ, a creature of the Gospel—and, therefore, not ours to dismember.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999) 270.

<sup>4</sup> Ishmael Noko, Pre-Assembly Report, Section XI, Greeting from the Lutheran World Federation, August 22, 2009. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Office of the Secretary.



The Assembly's opening Eucharist worship service around the theme of daily bread took place in Stuttgart's Stiftskirche.

Sisters and brothers of the Lutheran World Federation, we are called to live as *communio* because, most profoundly, living is communion. Christian faith and contemporary science agree that to be is to be in relationship and that to be alive is to be immersed in an amazing, complex, multidimensional web of relationships.

The revival of Trinitarian theology in the last decades reminds us that life *par excellence* is the life of the Trinity and not of some self-identical One alone with itself. To use Bishop Antje Jackelén's image of a "dance" to describe a life most fundamentally real; life is first and foremost the dance of Trinitarian relations, communion in the strongest sense of the word.

*Communio* is a sheer gift, God's action of radical grace. *Communio* is a lived event—being made a new creation in Christ, reconciled and given the message and ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, *communio* defines our self-understanding as the LWF and *communio* becomes our vocation, our way of life. In other words, *communio* has profound implications for how we are as the Lutheran World Federation and for what we do as the LWF.

Communion describes our relatedness to all of God's creation. We hear the whole creation groaning in travail as life form after life form dies. Ultimately, the problem is not simply pollution of the water and air with resulting global warming. Rather, for us as Christians, it is the spiritual blasphemy of treating God's good creation as something else—as an adversarial wilderness, a god-forsaken wasteland, a natural resources dump to be used for our own consumptive living and economic prosperity. It is blasphemous because by our conduct we are saying, "We will be our own gods. We will treat the planet as if there is no god who made it, no god who declares it good, no god who reconciles it, no god who sustains it and who holds us responsible for its care."

Over a decade ago, Lutheran theologian Joseph Sittler said that from a Christian point of view, the ecological

crisis presents us not simply with moral tasks, but requires of us a freshly renovated and fundamental theology. As the Lutheran World Federation, we are committed to that task with the LWF Department for Theology and Studies' theological responses to climate change making a significant contribution.

In a recent posted letter to the ELCA following the ongoing BP petroleum spill in the Gulf of Mexico, I wrote that indignation and anger over neglect and carelessness that led to this disaster is understandable. However, to do so without recognizing the responsibility we all share—as consumers of petroleum products, as investors in an economy that makes intensive and insistent energy demands, and as citizens responsible for the care of creation—lacks credibility and integrity. An honest accounting of what happened (and what failed to happen) must include our own repentance.

Yet our witness is that God remains faithful in restoring the creation and human community. God has not abandoned the creation. The life-giving power of God's creative goodness remains at work. The Spirit continues to "renew the face of the earth" (Ps 104:30). The centrality of this proclamation shapes our response to the current environmental crisis. The cleansing water of baptism in Christ, who died not for the righteous, but for the unrighteous, brings forgiveness and reconciliation. In this reconciled life with God, we have the freedom to move beyond hostility and condemnation to give the powerful witness of a reconciled community that lives in service of the creation and our neighbor. This is a moment when the human community needs to hear not only our words of judgment, but also a word of true hope, for we have one to speak.

## DIACONAL

Communion is lived in God's relationship with us, in our relationship with the creation, in our relationships with



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one another in the LWF and in our relationship to our neighbor. As former DMD director Kjell Nordstokke emphasized, we have been called by one who is “among you as one who serves” into a communion that is a *koinonia* of *diakonia*, of reconciliation that reaches across every border and boundary to all the world. “To be in Christ implies being in his *XARIS*—in his work of love.”<sup>5</sup>

Communion as central to our self-understanding means that to be the Lutheran World Federation is to be engaged in *diakonia*. It is the work to which God calls us, the Holy Spirit empowers us and for which Christ sets us free, “so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them” (2 Cor 5:15).

It is through service, *diakonia*, that God continues to recreate and restore community in our midst. We have made clear that the basic directions of our diaconal work will be transformation, reconciliation and empowerment. *Diakonia* is our response to the realities of our varied contexts—rebuilding communities after a natural disaster, providing health care and education, accompanying those who live in poverty as they seek daily bread, and working to challenge economic systems of illegitimate debt. As the general secretary reports, “the active participation of local partner communities in LWF’s work adds greater credibility to subsequent advocacy work, which in turn makes the theological work more connected with real life and its fruits of faith more visible.”<sup>6</sup>

Communion in Christ in a world of brokenness, sin and injustice is necessarily a life-giving way of the cross—a solidarity in suffering, a fellowship of resistance, a com-

munity of faith that loves and acts in hope for the world that God so loves.

So for us, the theology of the cross becomes most essential. As Jacob Tesfai has written, “Wherever there is suffering, there are found not only *the crucified people* but *the crucified Jesus* as well... In this understanding there is a unity and solidarity between Jesus and those who are suffering in their daily existence from unjust structures created by human beings. Their cries meld into those of Jesus. He and the suffering people are one; he is one of them.”<sup>7</sup>

This life-giving way of the cross opens out to endless tasks in every direction, down hard roads it would be easy to avoid. Yet it is radical freedom, springing from God’s amazing grace. It makes it possible for Christian community to be more than yet another mechanism of parochial or imperialist control. As a communion of the cross rather than glory we will be engaged in a persistent ministry of proclamation and reconciliation and healing without borders. Vitor Westhelle describes this reality in terms of adjacency: the event of the church standing “squarely in the in-between spaces—spaces where life is produced and reproduced—and the spaces of political life, of human communication, policy-framing and mores-forming activities ... The church is not an organic self-enclosed system but is open to the vicissitudes of communicative action and is shaped by them.”<sup>8</sup>

## ECUMENICAL

Yet not on our own. To be The Lutheran World Federation: A Communion of Churches is to be ecumenical. When a radically inclusive communion is God’s gift to us in Christ and at the center of our self-understanding, we will always

<sup>5</sup> Kjell Nordstokke, “The Theology of Diakonia,” a paper presented at the installation of Anders Wejryd as Archbishop of Uppsala, 2 September 2006, 8.

<sup>6</sup> *From Winnipeg to Stuttgart, 2003–2010* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2009), 37.

<sup>7</sup> Jacob Tesfai, “The Crucified People,” in *The Scandal of a Crucified World*, ed. Jacob Tesfai (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994) 10–11.

<sup>8</sup> Vitor Westhelle, *The Church Event: Call and Challenge of a Church Protestant* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 39, 44.





define ourselves first in terms of our relatedness to others in the body of Christ. To quote Bonhoeffer, “We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ. What does this mean? It means, *first*, that a Christian needs others for the sake of Jesus Christ. It means, *second*, that a Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. It means, *third*, that from eternity we have been chosen in Jesus Christ, accepted in time and united for eternity.”<sup>9</sup>

May these years leading up to 2017 and the commemoration of 500 years of the ongoing Lutheran Reformation be a time not only for affirming the strong theological and confessional foundations we share as Lutherans, but for renewing a commitment that to be Lutheran is to be both evangelical and ecumenical.

As the LWF deepens its self-understanding as a communion of churches, it is also imperative that we are clear about how Christian World Communions will strengthen the unity of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. A vibrant World Council of Churches is a vital instrument of making visible that unity. The LWF’s role in supporting the first Global Christian Forum in Nairobi, Kenya, is a clear indication of our commitment to expanding expressions of our unity within the diversity we have as the body of Christ.

LWF member churches are living out Jesus’ prayer to the Father “that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (Jn 17:23). We gather with other Christians for prayer and Bible study, engage together in working for peace and justice, join with other churches and agencies to respond to hunger, homelessness and natural disasters, and participate in Councils of Churches, ecumenical dialogues, full communion relationships.

Yet it is clear that sin deeply disrupts our communion with God, with Christians and with each other. Both individually and corporately, we become—to use Luther’s language—*incurvatus in se*, curved in on ourselves.

Therefore, our new life in Christ is communion restored. But not only restored, for in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God initiates a more profoundly radical communion in which nothing “will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:39).

Throughout this report I have been reminding us that, baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ, we are renewed in our relationships with God and with each other and transformed. Such communion is not simply life but life abundant, overflowing; not only life but a life-giving dynamic, a Spirit-driven disturbance within and among us that puts us in motion, that sets us on the way in mission. It is communion as community, that is, *ecclesia*—a called-out people—every *incurvatus* turned inside out in a dance that moves to the neighbor.

That dynamic of communion is the undoing of every *incurvatus*. Therefore—to use the rich Brazilian term *convivência* (coexistence)—our confession can live in the movement of the Spirit only in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue and praxis. In addressing the Lutheran-Muslim dialogue in Indonesia, Ingo Wulforst said, “*Diap Praxis* focuses on the life and space we share in multifaith contexts and demands that people of different religious convictions develop a common vision of solidarity, respect, justice and compassion. In *diap Praxis* the other is no longer the ‘other,’ the alien, but becomes a friend, a companion struggling for peace and justice in *convivência* (coexistence).”<sup>10</sup> May

<sup>9</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 5 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 31.

<sup>10</sup> Ingo Wulforst, “The Lutheran World Federation’s Study Programs on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations,” occasional paper presented at the Lutheran Muslim dialogue in Indonesia (Geneva, Switzerland, April 2002), 7.



such *diap Praxis* continue to be an expression of our self-understanding as a communion.

### THREE SPECIFIC ISSUES: LEADERSHIP, DECISION-MAKING AND SUSTAINABILITY

As I conclude these reflections, there are three specific issues we must address for they shape our life as a communion of churches: leadership, decision-making and sustainability.

#### LEADERSHIP

When our self-understanding is that we are a radically inclusive and richly diverse communion, then leadership will reflect that diversity. We have made progress in our commitment to encourage member churches to support the ordination of women. Yet we have much work to do in holding one another accountable for that commitment.

A radically inclusive communion will challenge systems of privilege that perpetuate power on the basis of gender, race or class. A radically inclusive communion will do far better than we have done the past seven years in electing and appointing women to positions of leadership within the LWF and within member churches. A radically inclusive communion will see gender and generational justice as lived out in our own systems of leadership development as well as in society.

This radically inclusive communion will face the challenge of supporting churches in the South, developing accessible and contextual models of leadership development for their rapidly growing churches. Northern member churches can learn much about how important the training of lay evangelists and catechists is to the growth and renewal of the church. In future meetings with the leadership of the

International Lutheran Council, let us pledge together to find ways to ensure that the formation of leaders does not become the occasion for calling into question the confessional integrity of either ILC or LWF member churches.

#### DECISION-MAKING

The renewal committee has helped us consider how decisions are made in the Lutheran World Federation. That important discussion must continue during this Assembly and in coming years.

What decisions belong to the LWF Council and what are the responsibility of the general secretary and cabinet? What authority will regions have to shape priorities and programs for their context that at the same time reflect and support our self-understanding as a communion of churches? How do we hold in healthy tension respect for member churches making decisions that reflect their self-understanding regarding what it means to be faithful Lutherans engaged in mission in their context while also recognizing that decisions made by member churches have implications for the unity of the entire communion? When we face diminished financial resources, how will member churches be held accountable for their support of the LWF?

#### SUSTAINABILITY

The issue of sustainability calls for an entire paper, a global consultation. It certainly belongs to the theme of this Assembly, for when we pray “Give us today our daily bread,” we are praying for all that we need to sustain daily life—not simply our own lives, but also the life of the whole world and our vocations in it, for which we receive our daily bread. The ELCA social statement on economic life, *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All*, addresses this issue: “When we pray in the Lord’s Prayer, ‘Give us this day our daily bread,’

## DAY TWO 21 JULY

Beginning with a morning Eucharist and Bible study, Assembly participants gathered each day in “Village Groups.” The LWF president’s address (Plenary II), was followed by reports from the general secretary (Plenary III), Assembly committees and the treasurer (Plenary IV). Outgoing LWF president Bishop Mark S. Hanson answered journalists’ questions at a midday press conference; delegates attended regional meetings in the evening.



we place ourselves in tension with economic assumptions of our society. Rather than being self-sufficient, we need and depend on what God gives or provides through people, practices and systems. ‘Daily bread’ is not earned by efforts of individuals alone, but is made possible through a variety of relationships and institutions.”<sup>11</sup>

The LWF is engaged actively with member churches and partner agencies in working to develop sustainable communities that are committed to a sustainable environment. Such sustainable development is a continuing commitment that centers on empowering people to develop power and sustainable systems that overcome the forces and factors that oppress, dehumanize, exclude and marginalize them. As a communion, we accompany one another in this process of self-determination that leads to improving the quality of life of people.

Our self-understanding as an inclusive communion informs how we understand sustainability. Interdependence will guide the path we take in sustaining the work of the LWF and support member churches. If we retreat from our trust in LWF leaders and staff to make decisions regarding priorities for the LWF and its member churches, we risk giving in, instead, to a pattern of member churches making decisions on the basis of their own priorities and resources. Instead, let our proclamation of God’s abundance inform our stewardship of resources. As a communion, let us together be “good stewards of the

manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received” (1 Pet 4:10).

As with previous LWF assemblies, we gather in Stuttgart when the world is in pain. Billions live in poverty in a world of great affluence and abundance. Wars rage, the creation groans under the weight of our consumption, refugees wander in search of shelter, illness and death come to those who lack access to clean water and health care. You bring to this Assembly the cries of the people in your communities.

Yet we gather for this Assembly in confident hope, for God has neither abandoned God’s people nor forsaken God’s creation. In diverse languages yet with one voice we are bold to declare, “Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet 1:3).

We gather in Stuttgart as more than fragments who momentarily put together the semblance of a whole. We gather because we are one by God’s grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God’s gift of unity will be experienced and expressed again and again in the midst of our varied diversity and even our differences. Life abundant is life lived in relationship with the Triune God, with God’s creation and all of God’s children.

From here we will be sent into the world God so loves and continues to reconcile. We will go in the power of the Holy Spirit and with the promise of the good news of Jesus Christ. Yes, we will leave just as we begin this Assembly—in confident hope. Praise be to God.

<sup>11</sup> *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (Department for Studies of the Division for Church in Society: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, September 1999) 4.

Delegates reacting to the address of the outgoing LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson, and exchanging views during a break.



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# Address of the General Secretary

## Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko

### INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Your presence here—as delegates, ecumenical participants, honored guests, visitors, official representatives of the state and local municipal authorities—is a sign that the LWF Eleventh Assembly has begun in earnest. We are grateful to Bishop Frank O. July and, through him, to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg and the local committee under the leadership of Kirchenrat Klaus Rieth; to the Leading Bishop Dr Johannes Friedrich, to the German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD); to the state and municipal authorities; to the Assembly Planning Committee; to the International Worship Committee and its corresponding local counterpart; to the As-

sembly Content Coordinator, Professor Erwin Buck and Gertrude Buck; to the Assembly Office in Geneva under the leadership of the Deputy General Secretary Rev. Chandran Paul Martin, the LWF Cabinet and members of the staff in Geneva; to the IT coordinator Ms Jeannette Sylla; to the stewards, the volunteers and the translators and interpreters. Without your dedicated work, this Assembly would not be possible. I want also to offer a special word of appreciation to the mayor and the authorities of the city of Stuttgart for the generous hospitality extended to us.

I also extend greetings to my predecessor Bishop emeritus Dr Gunnar Stålsett who will be joining us later this week, and to former LWF Presidents Bishop emeritus Christian Krause and Rev. Dr Gottfried Brakemeier. Dr Brakemeier was unfortunately unable to



attend the Assembly in person, but sends his best wishes for this occasion.

### FROM WINNIPEG

Seven years ago, we gathered in the city of Winnipeg, Canada, for the Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation. We met under the theme “For the Healing of the World.” We departed from Winnipeg with the shared conviction that, as churches and individuals, we are called to be a healing and reconciling community, to be a sign of hope in the midst of brokenness. We harvested the fruits of our discernment into a basketful of 101 commitments and resolutions. On the basis of these commitments and resolutions, the secretariat and the Council identified four main priority areas around which programs and projects were organized and implemented for the period between Winnipeg and Stuttgart. These priority areas are: i) to strengthen Lutheran identity as a communion of churches in mission; ii) to deepen ecumenical commitment and foster interfaith relations; iii) to bear witness in church and society to God’s healing, reconciliation and justice; and iv) to enhance communication, mutual accountability and sharing.

### THE SIX-YEAR REPORT

In the six-year report,<sup>1</sup> the general secretary, on behalf of the Council, gives account to the Assembly of the programmatic activities and other initiatives undertaken within these four priority areas. My remarks today are based on the assumption that delegates have had sufficient

time to read this document and that detailed reporting is superfluous. In addition, member churches were kept informed about the work of the LWF through annual reports, *Lutheran World Information*, a steady flow of press releases, publications and the distribution of Council decisions. It is assumed that these information resources are shared within the churches through their own internal information distribution systems. For purposes of this report today, I will limit myself to just a few observations, based on the life and experience of the LWF over these years.

### TO STUTTGART: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ASSEMBLING IN GERMANY

It is now 58 years since the LWF assembled for the first time here in the land of the Reformation (Hanover, 1952). Today it is difficult to imagine what efforts it took for the German churches to host such an international event at a time when the German people were extremely vulnerable, politically and in other ways. And yet, they chose to host it despite all difficulties. It was an act of spiritual courage rooted in the desire to promote national and international reconciliation. By God’s grace, Lutherans learned to accept and to live with each other, when there was every reason for them to go their separate ways. The churches in Germany showed a willingness to do the most difficult thing, namely, openly to speak about their painful national history and to let others have a say. From across the face of the earth they came in numbers and committed themselves to stay together for the sake of the *unity* which Christ willed and prayed for. In this regard, I want to believe that the Assembly at Hanover was as transformative an experience for Lutherans then as the World Cup has been for the people of the Republic of South Africa today.

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<sup>1</sup> *From Winnipeg to Stuttgart, 2003–2010. The report of the General Secretary on behalf of the Council*, Geneva, Lutheran World Federation, 2009.



Bishop Hanson and LWF Office for Communication Services Director Rev. Karin Achtelstetter addressing journalists at a 21 July press conference.

The world has changed since 1952. Developments such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the liberation of Nelson Mandela released forces that have reshaped our global village. The forces of globalization have both connected and disconnected people. The gap between those who do not have enough to eat and those who have far more than they need has grown tremendously. Despite stronger controls, the movement of people crossing borders to seek a better tomorrow has increased. Here in Europe, the situation of minority peoples and communities has become an increasingly heated political issue. At the same time, theological dialogues and ecclesial agreements have changed the European ecumenical landscape. And interreligious dialogues and consultations have a greater priority than ever before.

Political scientists and economists describe Germany as the major player in the process of European integration. Therefore holding an Assembly on German soil brings us face-to-face with European realities such as immigration, secularization and the ecclesial and missiological question of what it means to be church in Europe today. Could this be an occasion for the churches in Europe to share with others the challenges they face within a context of such rapid change? What do these changes mean for the churches in Europe that have traditionally been seen as “majority” churches? What can the “minority” churches in Europe say about being church in transition?

Germany was also at the epicenter of the sixteenth-century Reformation. Here, nearly 500 years ago, a dynamic movement took hold which built on previous movements in the Western church. This movement refocused on the gospel of God’s justifying grace as proclaimed in the Scriptures. It was in this region that initiatives began to make the Bible accessible again to the ordinary believer. Translating the Bible into German—long before the advent of the Bible Societies—was a fundamental step toward

equipping the faithful to be fluent in the first language of their faith: *knowledge of the Scriptures*.

Toward this goal, Luther and some of his colleagues in Wittenberg initiated the production of Christian educational materials for the instruction of children, youth, laity and clergy. It was in Wittenberg that Luther’s Small Catechism was produced, now translated into more languages than any other of the Lutheran confessional writings. It was a fulfillment in its day of one of the expectations expressed in the Official Common Statement on the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ, 1999) to “interpret the message of justification in language relevant for human beings today.”<sup>2</sup>

Many people coming to this country for the first time see the places where Luther lived and worked as literally “inspirational.” While these Reformation sites belong to the German people, the *spiritual* wealth they represent is in my view an ecumenical gift to the one church of Jesus Christ. Therefore, meeting here offers an opportunity for Christians from other lands to reconnect spiritually with the historical place where the Reformation movement crystallized.

## GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Sisters and brothers, we are gathered here today from different contexts, nations and tribes of many tongues, and from different time zones. We bring with us the experiences, perspectives, concerns and emotions of the people we represent. We shall spend an entire week discerning what God wants us to be and do, under the theme: ***Give us today our daily bread.*** When Martin Luther spoke of “daily bread” he referred not only to physical and spiritual sustenance, but to all that is necessary for a human life in

<sup>2</sup> [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils)



dignity—including good government. In so doing, Luther leads us to address the structural causes of physical and spiritual poverty, as well as the symptoms.

Millions of people on our planet still do not have their daily bread, rice, ugali, or potato—food that is healthy, nutritious and appropriate to their needs and cultures. They do not have daily shelter and daily clean water. They suffer from unjust national and international economics and politics.

The petition for our daily bread is a communal petition—not for “my” bread but for “our” bread—that entails communal responsibility rather than individual privilege, not only within the human community but also within the community of creation. According to the biblical story of the Garden of Eden, human beings have dominion over creation. They are charged with “presidential responsibility and duties” for the whole of creation. Therefore the “us” and the “our” in the prayer includes the needs of our fellow human beings, as well as those of the rest of creation including the buffalo, the elephant, the birds and the fish, and the *wellness* of the environment. What we receive from God is only edible, digestible, enjoyable and spiritually nutritious when we are conscious of the needs of others.

In the current context of global economic and environmental crisis, provoked in part by greed and a lack of mutual accountability, the theme of this Assembly is especially poignant. How can and how should we live together in this global village? How can and how should we recognize and reflect the interconnectedness of the whole human family? How can and how should we demonstrate responsibility and love to our neighbor? How can and how should we together sustain, nurture and strengthen our communion? How can and how should we as churches hold our political and economic leaders to account? How can and how should we exercise our “presiding” responsibility and obligation toward a suffering creation? How can we find the “Christ” in “crisis”? These are some of the essential questions for our deliberation.

Bread also represents the spiritual significance of simple fellowship. It was in the act of breaking bread that the risen Lord Jesus was revealed to the travelers on the road to Emmaus. It is in fellowship and care for one another that we recognize the face of God. And so may we find the face of Christ around the Lord’s Table, in conversations and daily meals during these days together.

### BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNION OF CHURCHES

One of the significant steps taken by the Assembly in Winnipeg was to add to the LWF’s name the descriptive phrase “A communion of churches.” This implies a change of perspective regarding the relationship between the LWF as an organization and its member churches. The member churches **are** the LWF, and through the structures of governance they live out their *koinonia*. Yet, we should recognize that the LWF has what one might call two “qualities.” Structures such as the Assembly, the Council (with its various committees) and the Communion Office are the **organs** of the Lutheran communion; they share in the DNA of the communion. The second quality is expressed when the LWF acts as an **instrument** of the communion, as it relates to other organizations or communities outside the communion of member churches.

Communion in Christ is a gift of the Holy Spirit. It is also a task and a responsibility; a calling for all of us to engage in the work of communion-building and a privilege to do so. The six-year report highlights numerous examples of consultations, workshops, visitation programs by staff, and from church to church, and other activities and initiatives whereby the LWF has sought to pursue this task. The meetings of the Council and of the committees of the Council, held in different places, have been instrumental

### DAY THREE 22 JULY

The keynote address by the Archbishop of Canterbury (*photo*) Rowan Williams (Plenary V) and responses were followed by the first report of the Nominations Committee. The Assembly “Action on the Legacy of Lutheran Persecution of Anabaptists” was preceded by silent reflection and prayer, concluding in a public worship service of confession and repentance. An evening session (Plenary VIII) focused on the LWF Renewal Committee report.





in strengthening member churches to work together and to see beyond their immediate contexts. You have seen the different kinds of publications initiated through the various departments and units of the LWF. There are also exhibitions on display at this Assembly that illustrate the work carried out by the LWF, member churches and related agencies, as well as ACT Alliance and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance. The Public Hearings during this Assembly are intended to animate discussions on some of the issues that have preoccupied the LWF over the past seven years: food security and climate change, illegitimate external debt and HIV and AIDS. All these activities and interests have brought together representatives from member churches from across the world to work together and thus to promote intra-Lutheran unity in God's mission.

Communication is the lifeblood of the communion. As members of the communion it is our duty to ensure that we keep communication going in and between regions. Without good communication, relationships break down, leading to frustration and suspicion.

The Communion Office, mentioned earlier as one of the organs of the LWF communion, is indispensable for the building of communion. Therefore it is important that such an office be sustainable for the sake of the whole communion and that it represent our global diversity.

We are called to be an *inclusive* communion. Without living out that calling, we cannot be effective witnesses for justice and inclusiveness in our societies. There have been many expressions of this commitment by the LWF within the limitations of its evolving self-understanding: many resolutions, the appointment of specialized desks, the establishment of quotas and the articulation of an inclusive ecclesiology. Nonetheless, more than 60 years after its foundation, the LWF still struggles to live up to its own vision of inclusiveness. We continue to be chal-

lenged to work toward becoming a communion that truly reflects the body of Christ—complete in all its parts and representative of its full diversity.

Equitable participation in God's mission is the hallmark of an inclusive communion. Member churches were therefore urged to take appropriate steps toward the ordination of women and, where it was not the case, to put in place policies of equality. During the last Assembly the call was directed to member churches to undertake theological study on overcoming the remaining barriers that prevent gender mainstreaming and women's ordination. But in most cases, even Assembly or Council decisions that received strong support at the time do not enjoy much subsequent follow-up by churches. It challenges us to examine whether and to what extent Assembly resolutions are considered by the churches as morally binding. We confess that we are a communion, but in many cases it seems we are still live and act like a federation. However, even belated and partial progress must be acknowledged. You may recall that the LWF Seventh Assembly in 1984 called for a balance to be achieved between men and women Assembly delegates as of the LWF Ninth Assembly. That vision has finally been realized at this Assembly.

The LWF put in place a Youth Desk in the early '80s in order to coordinate and support youth programs in member churches. Over the years both the Assembly and Council, as well as other governing bodies of the Federation, have made resolution after resolution calling for a church inclusive of its youth. Some progress has been made in this regard. Nevertheless the absence of young people in many churches today, and the fact that many are finding more meaning in charismatic worship services, is a sign that mainline churches need to renew their liturgies and practices. At this Assembly we shall hear more from the LWF Youth about how they envision more inclusiveness in the life of the communion.

Dr Christian Krause of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick (right) embracing H.E. Metropolitan Augoustinos of Germany (left).



The body's strength depends on the participation of all its members. Around 10 percent of the world's population—or 650 million people—live with a disability, and 80 percent of them live in developing countries. For the church to be an inclusive community for people with disabilities is not an option but is a characteristic by which it must be defined.

The church has a special responsibility to create a space for those communities that have been weakened and excluded in both church and society to speak for themselves. Toward this goal the Assembly in Winnipeg emphatically recognized the place of indigenous peoples in society and in our communion. Yet, much more needs to be done in order to recognize and affirm the indigenous perspective and voice in the Lutheran communion, in the wider church and in society at large.

Likewise, more needs to be done in pursuit of the dignity and rights of Dalits, and against the entrenched discrimination of the “untouchables,” which represents radical denial of the most basic notions of human dignity and the most fundamental principles of human rights. The issue has increasingly emerged as a focus of international ecumenical concern and action, notably at a joint WCC/LWF global ecumenical conference in 2009 at Bangkok. This called for a global ecumenical solidarity movement to end this dehumanizing system of exclusion. This is a call I personally wish to affirm and extend to the Assembly.

I also have in my heart the Lutheran communities of Kazakhstan and the region of Central Asia, whose history, struggle and perseverance greatly moved me when I visited them in the years 2003, 2006 and 2009. These communities, having suffered forced removal, suppression of their identity, massive emigration, poverty and lack of opportunity, have nevertheless survived and maintained their faith in God's goodness and justice. They are true witnesses and examples to the whole church. It is the mission and responsibility of a global communion of churches to lift up the voices of its smallest and

most excluded members, whose voices would never be heard by the international media, but who have much to tell about human dignity and faithful witness to the gospel.

### DIACONAL RESPONSE AND CURRENT CHALLENGES

Diakonia is an integral part of being a communion of churches. It is the proclamation of God's mercy and justice through deeds of love and compassion, the expression of the love of neighbor and a further means of witnessing to Christ. In diaconal action, the church points beyond itself to the kingdom of God in our midst. For the LWF, diaconal responsibility to refugees and other victims of conflict provided the first invitation to join the path that led us to communion among Lutheran churches globally. And we continue to live out the diaconal calling through our faithful service to the poor and the oppressed in LWF country programs throughout the world.

Diakonia cannot be divorced from the Eucharist or from prayer. It is prayer and action; prayer *in* action. These days, prayer is too often regarded as an expression of the church's powerlessness, of its surrender to the powers and principalities of this world. The tendency is to treat prayer as plan “B” on which to fall back when every other human effort has failed. And yet, prayer is the energy without which diakonia loses its essential character and vitality.

Jesus Christ was the first “deacon,” who cared for the poor, the sick and the oppressed. This was one of the defining features of his ministry on earth. His question to the paralytic man at the pool of Bethesda, “Do you want to be healed?” is as relevant today as it was then. Development has long been focused on the delivery of goods and services, which has inevitably resulted in a culture of dependency. Diakonia must be about the whole person, a



process in which the whole person is engaged as an active participant in their own healing and well-being.

LWF member churches have acted together in reflecting theologically on their public role and in developing common strategies to respond to poverty and economic injustice, for diakonia is not just about responding to the symptoms of human suffering, but about seeking prophetically to change what is causing or contributing to poverty and injustice.

The LWF has joined the growing ecumenical movement for climate justice by actively addressing environmental degradation, desertification and the humanitarian impacts of increasingly severe weather events and recognizing the particularly harsh impact of climate change on the poor—including food security, livelihoods and the environment. At this Assembly, we will have a special opportunity to reflect on the impact of climate change on the availability of daily bread for all God's people and to deliver a clear theological message about our global interconnectedness and common responsibility.

During these days we will also reflect together on other global challenges that have marked the LWF's prophetic diakonia since Winnipeg, including our work in addressing the moral and ethical dimensions of illegitimate debt on the basis of a an LWF program hosted in Buenos Aires by the Latin American churches on behalf of the entire Lutheran Communion; and our ongoing role in responding to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. We shall give attention to our responsibility to uphold the rights and dignity of all people – especially the most marginalized and excluded.

## ECUMENICAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

The formation of the ACT Alliance from a reconfiguration of ACT International and ACT Development demonstrates

the dynamic involvement of the LWF in practical ecumenism. Out of more than 100 members of ACT Alliance, about one third belongs to the Lutheran family. This is a visible sign of the shared commitment of Lutheran churches to ecumenical cooperation in diakonia.

The signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification in 1999 was a powerful sign of the value of the LWF as an instrument for ecumenical progress. On 31 October 2009, in Augsburg, Lutherans, Roman Catholics and Methodists commemorated the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration. A planting of commemorative trees in Wittenberg took place during these 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations with the participation of representatives of various Christian World Communions, underscoring the wide ecumenical significance of this document. The dialogue related to the JDDJ is continuing. A group of biblical scholars from the LWF, the Roman Catholic Church, the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the World Methodist Council is engaged in further study of the biblical understanding of justification. Local and regional dialogues are also reaching important new understandings, such as the recently-concluded dialogue between Lutherans and Catholics in the Nordic countries.

Another initiative carrying very wide ecumenical potential was the adoption of the LWF statement on *episkopé* in Lund in 2007. Indeed, Lutherans do not see themselves as “the church,” but as a movement within the one church. We are *aware* that we need other Christians. The results of that awareness and of the relationships that we have consistently pursued are visible in this Assembly. The unprecedented number of ecumenical participants makes this Assembly itself a landmark in the history of ecumenism.

Here in Stuttgart we will be asked to take an action redefining our relations with Mennonites from whom we have been estranged for 500 years and about whom our Lutheran confessions had very harsh things to say. Leading

Delegates voting; and praying in preparation for the Assembly action of repentance and reconciliation for past Lutheran persecution of Anabaptists.





theologians of our movement—including Martin Luther himself—were willing to use theological arguments to support the violent persecution of members of the Anabaptist tradition. But now we can build on the careful historical and theological work of the Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission, whose report has been made available to all delegates. We will consider an action that asks for forgiveness—from God and from our Mennonite sisters and brothers—for the persecution and violence of which our Lutheran forebears were guilty and of which we are the inheritors. I appreciate the fact that the International Lutheran Council is present when we take this action because all Lutherans share in this historical heritage.

This reflection and action will likely be one of the significant landmarks for which this Assembly is remembered and by which the future of the LWF and of the wider ecumenical movement will itself be marked. Only by rooting out the violence, exclusion and discrimination in our own tradition and practice as Lutheran churches, and by seeking to heal memories among us and between us and other church families, can we become credible and effective witnesses for peace and reconciliation in our wider societies.

On behalf of all of us, I say a special word of welcome to His Eminence Walter Cardinal Kasper, now the President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and also the former bishop of this very place. Wherever he has been, he has worked with us Lutherans in warm and fruitful cooperation, and we take this opportunity to thank him for all that he has accomplished. We also want to extend our congratulations for the 50th anniversary this year of the formation of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, the forerunner of what is now the Pontifical Council.

We are honored also that the Ecumenical Patriarchate is represented at this Assembly. Our dialogue with *Orthodox*

*churches* is our longest continuing dialogue, preparing now to celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> year. The Commission has found and articulated important areas of agreement in recent years on topics surrounding the church, notably on the Eucharist, and has helped deepen mutual knowledge and respect with these venerable communities of our shared faith.

In many parts of the world, Lutherans and *Anglicans* live very closely together, and in a number of places have expressed these mutual recognitions in terms of agreements of communion. Through such lenses as the diaconal character of the church, our dialogue seeks to deepen these relationships.

We extend our warmest greetings to the new *World Communion of Reformed Churches*, formed last month and bringing together two separate Reformed church families. Your presence at this Assembly immediately following your own Uniting General Council is a strong ecumenical sign of encouragement for Lutherans who are praying for the same goal.

We are pleased also to have our *Methodist* partners with us. Last year in Augsburg, as we celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, one of the most prominent new developments was the presence with us of Methodists, who also have added their affirmation to the Declaration in the years since the last Assembly.

We look forward to 2017 when we will mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Evangelical Reformation*. It is my hope that we might find an appropriate ecumenical way to mark this anniversary in which we can celebrate what we have achieved in overcoming the condemnations of the past and in making visible the unity of the church, and in which we seek to discover together the message of the Evangelical Reformation for the whole of the church today.

The *World Council of Churches* has a unique and irreplaceable role in bringing Christians together, and many of



During the Assembly action, participants listened intently to Mennonite World Conference President Danisa Ndlovu's address, and Mennonite Church Canada Executive Secretary (Witness) Janet Plenert presented a foot-washing tub to LWF President Hanson.

our member churches are its members also. This “double belonging” is represented here by the new General Secretary of the WCC, the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, from our own Church of Norway. As the WCC prepares for the culmination of its Decade to Overcome Violence, we recognize how deeply its concerns and commitments are also ours. The WCC Assembly in 2013 is being organized as an inclusive and participatory event, and the LWF will play its full role both in the planning process and in the Assembly itself. I would encourage us to consider what additional steps we as a communion might take in this regard, such as holding an LWF Council meeting in conjunction with the WCC Central Committee or within the “expanded space” of the WCC Assembly.

## INTERFAITH DIAPRAXIS

As much as we seek the church’s visible unity for the sake of Christ’s mission on earth, we recognize that there are other religious communities that constitute part of the world that God so loved. Therefore, the ecumenical community’s goal is not only the unity of the church, but the transformation of the human *race* into a human *family*.

The LWF is committed to enabling our member churches to relate to other religious communities in their contexts, to plant the seeds of transformation and to find what God is doing in other traditions and other cultures.

Interfaith diapraxis—practical cooperation across religious borders—has been a special focus of the life of the LWF in the period since Winnipeg. This engagement is based in part on the LWF’s longstanding practical experience in international diakonia. In countries such as Mauritania, Cambodia and elsewhere, people of other faiths are working for and with the LWF in the pursuit of a shared humanitarian objective. Through this practical

cooperation in humanitarian service—even if we still have much to learn and to understand—interfaith diapraxis has become part of the LWF’s being.

In the year 2002, an LWF-supported initiative on the African continent brought together seven major religious traditions, namely Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Baha’i and African Traditional Religion. Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA) is the network and process that resulted. An IFAPA Commission was appointed to help guide the work of this network, and IFAPA women’s and youth desks were established. With private sector support, a pilot project of interfaith collaboration for water resource access and management was undertaken in the Kirehe district of Rwanda. Numerous interfaith initiatives were taken in conflict-affected or post-conflict situations in Africa. Many LWF member churches in Africa have participated in these initiatives, gaining important insights and developing valuable relationships.

In Asia, the understanding of interfaith diapraxis has been informed by the local communities’ response to the devastating impact of the 2004 tsunami. Formerly separated by religion, Muslims and Christians found themselves working side-by-side, discovering compassionate human beings behind religious stereotypes. The friendships and mutual cooperation that resulted inspired subsequent LWF seminars on a “dialogue for life.” Diapraxis provides a platform from which people of all faiths can jointly address many common concerns and, in the process, build deeper and stronger relationships.

## THE LWF RENEWAL PROCESS

At its meeting in Jerusalem/Bethlehem in 2005, the Council endorsed the general secretary’s proposal to initiate a process



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to envision a renewed LWF. The Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the Council, appointed a Renewal Committee chaired by Bishop emeritus Raymond Schultz.

The decision to embark on the renewal of the LWF was based on an assessment of the changes that have created a different context for the LWF today than that of the past. The general human, social and political landscape has changed, and much of this change has been related to the processes of globalization. Ecumenical achievements have created a new environment for the ongoing search for visible unity. The decision in Winnipeg to add a descriptive phrase to the name of the LWF—"a communion of churches"—reflects a deepening of inner-Lutheran relations and of the LWF's self-understanding. These changes cannot any longer be accommodated in the current structure.

After a long process of consultation with various stakeholders, the Renewal Committee submitted its report to the Council in October 2009. The report included nine recommendations for action by the Council. The main outcome of the Council's decision was the proposal to amend the current constitution and to reorganize the Communion Office. Tomorrow, Bishop Schultz will introduce this item and the Assembly will be asked to make decisions on amending the Constitution. The new Council will deal with the Bylaws and the Communion Office. The secretariat self assessment process, in which the Executive Committee and staff participated, has been completed and the learning from this exercise will be invaluable for the next steps in this process.

One of the underlying reasons for seeking to renew the LWF is the realization that the LWF needs to be a place and a forum in which member churches can dialogue with each other; a place where a culture of listening permeates every conversation. There is a need to reduce the tendency to dominate decision-making processes. I believe that it was a timely step for the LWF to embark on this process at this moment. Changes in the contexts in which we are called to act together require an LWF that is truly owned by all member churches, not just by a few.

## MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND SEXUALITY

The Lutheran communion, like some other church families, is engaged in a process of discernment with regard to the pastoral challenges associated with issues of marriage, family and sexuality. These issues are hardly new, but have been emerging over a long period of time, in different ways and in different contexts. I have even found some of my own reports dating back to 1995 proposing a process of reflection on these issues.

As many of you will be well aware, the LWF Council appointed a task force mandated to develop guidelines

for the promotion of sustained and respectful conversations among and within the member churches on these pastoral and ethical concerns. In March 2007, the Council received the proposed guidelines and sent them to LWF member churches for use during a period of five years, i.e. from 2007 to 2012. The member churches were asked to consult each other in the process of decision-making regarding these matters. Like most other decisions of the LWF Council, these guidelines are not strictly binding on member churches, but should be morally persuasive.

From the reports received so far it is clear that the member churches are at various stages of reflection and action and that different positions are emerging on these issues.

During the pre-Assembly gatherings I have had consultative discussions with church leaders and delegates as to how we might proceed toward 2012, taking into account that the Assembly was imminent. The general consensus was that these issues not be dealt with by the Assembly but that the process be allowed to continue until 2012 as originally recommended by the task force.

I therefore advise the Assembly to allow the process to continue as planned for the sake of those member churches that have only recently begun to reflect on these matters. Beyond that, the newly elected Council will assume responsibility.

## CONCLUSION

On 31 October I conclude my service with the Lutheran World Federation. I thank you all, the member churches, President Bishop Mark Hanson and Ione Hanson, the Treasurer, Mr Peter Stoll, the Council members, Honorary Council members, LWF staff in Geneva and in the field, ecumenical collaborators and co-workers, my wife Gladys and family for the support you have given me throughout my ministry in the LWF. Your invaluable support was indispensable for the mandate I was called to undertake. Where I failed it was because I did it alone, and where I succeeded it was because you stood by my side. The President has informed me that on Friday this week I will have an opportunity to say special words of good-bye to the Assembly. I shall therefore wait until that moment to convey my appreciation to all of you.

To my successor Rev. Martin Junge, I congratulate you once again in the presence of the member churches and before the respectable ecumenical partners of the Lutheran World Federation. I commend you to God's care and ask the member churches and ecumenical friends to extend to you the friendship they have accorded to me over these years. Since the beginning of this year, the handing over has gone on well. I wish you and your family strength and God's blessings as you will soon take leadership responsibilities in the Lutheran World Federation.



REPORT OF THE TREASURER

# Progress in Stewardship

## Mr Peter Stoll

### TO BE A LUTHERAN COMMUNION UNDER CHANGING FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

What does it mean to be a Lutheran communion in the rapidly changing contexts of our globalized world today? What does it mean to meet the growing expectations of member churches? And what does it mean to support this communion under ever more challenging financial conditions?

Let us take a look at history. Shortly after World War II, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) started as a diaconal movement at a time when churches around the world wanted to jointly support the suffering people in Europe. At that time, there were three other motivations for the creation of a global body like the LWF: tackling mission challenges

jointly, reflecting theologically, and working together ecumenically. By engaging jointly in the four tasks, we discovered that we could be much more than a strategic alliance. We could be a communion.

Soon we realized that our work had to meet the needs of an ever-changing world. At least every year—sometimes every day—we saw new challenges and new circumstances for our work. What has made our work successful? We have held on to our mission and vision through all obstacles, while adapting everything else to the constant changes. From the very beginning, we did this globally.

Today, we are witnessing the accelerating pace of globalization. We are confronted with increasingly new challenges for our churches. We have to do our work under rapidly changing, if not deteriorating, financial conditions.



To cope with this situation, the LWF and its member churches have to concentrate on:

- being a communion;
- holding on to our mission and vision;
- being willing and flexible enough to adapt to the conditions and contexts in the world today.

Over the last several years, especially since the 2003 Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada, the LWF has been accelerating the learning process to deal with this situation. Let us first look at what has been successful.

### WHAT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN FINANCES SINCE WINNIPEG 2003

#### RESPONDING TO ETHICAL CONVICTIONS BY IMPLEMENTING STANDARDS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

In 2005, the LWF decided to respond to its ethical convictions of accountability, transparency and good stewardship by adopting international standards of good governance.

The presentation of the LWF's consolidated financial statements was changed accordingly to meet the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). This lengthy exercise, involving close cooperation with the external auditors and actuaries, concluded in 2008 with the presentation of the annual financial statements in conformity with IFRS and Swiss law. Its benefits to the LWF include:

- a clear, recognizable format for donors;
- full disclosure of all assets, liabilities and reserves;
- fairer presentation of performance (income and expenditure), cash flow and financial position;
- consistency in presentation in accordance with professional standards.

The authorities and auditors are putting more and more emphasis on good internal control systems (ICS) and risk management in different organizations, be it a profit-making company or a non-governmental organization (NGO). The LWF defines the ICS as the full range of activities, methods and steps, established by the Council, in order to ensure a smooth running of the activities. The LWF developed its ICS over the last several years by introducing the following elements:

- LWF principles for internal control systems;
- financial risk and control assessment;
- internal audits in all departments, including Department for World Service (DWS) country programs;
- administrative guidelines (including financial decision making, monitoring and control);
- investment principles and guidelines.

The following have been identified as key processes to be monitored:

- procurement;
- travel costs;
- physical assets;
- salaries;
- finance;
- information technology.

#### APPROPRIATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The most recent example of an appropriate emergency response was the Haiti earthquake. The LWF received pledges and funds from all corners of the world, from so-called rich and poor churches alike. As a reliable operational organization, the LWF receives funds also from governments and organizations related to the United Nations (UN).

Although the work in Haiti is very challenging, the LWF was quickly able to deploy staff from other country



Prayer preceded, and a special “Service of Repentance” followed the Assembly’s repentance and reconciliation action.



programs, agencies and from Geneva to speed up the rehabilitation work. Unlike other organizations that leave after a few months of an emergency, the LWF stays as long as the local communities need assistance.

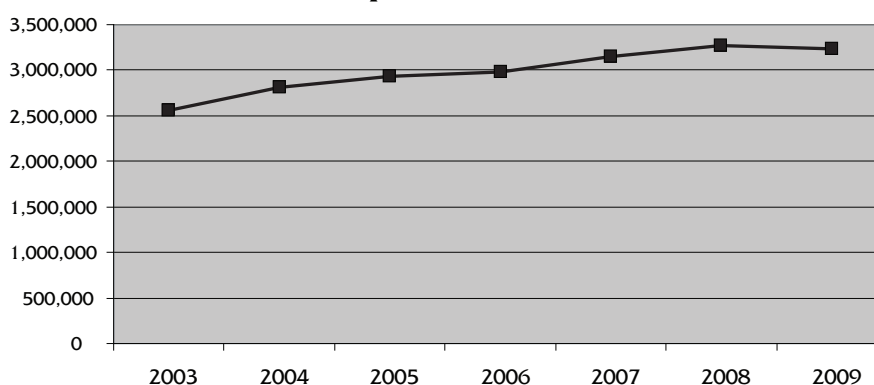
### FAIR MEMBERSHIP FEE

The LWF membership fees are calculated every two years. They are based on the number of members in the church and on the gross national income (GNI) or the wealth of the member church country. This has proven to be the best way to keep the membership fees as fair as possible. For example, if the GNI of the country increases and the number of members in the church stays the same, then the membership fee increases accordingly. Or, if two churches have the same number of members but the wealth of the countries (GNI) is different, then the church with higher GNI must pay a higher membership fee. For example, the Church of Norway and the Protestant Christian Batak Church in Indonesia have approximately the same number of members, but because the GNI of Norway is 15 times higher than the GNI of Indonesia, the membership fee of the Church of Norway is 15 times the fee of the Protestant Christian Batak Church in Indonesia.

The above chart shows the development of membership fees from 2003 to 2009.

The membership fee contributions increased from USD 2.6 million in 2003 to USD 3.2 million in 2009, an increase of 23 percent. This is a good sign. However, there are still churches both in the North and South that

**LWF Membership Fees 2003-2009 (USD)**



do not pay their fair membership fee. I strongly urge all churches to show ownership of and responsibility for the LWF by paying their membership fees.

### DEVELOPMENT AND CURRENT SITUATION OF THE RESERVES

The LWF is facing changing financial situations as are its member churches. To cope with these changes reserves are necessary.

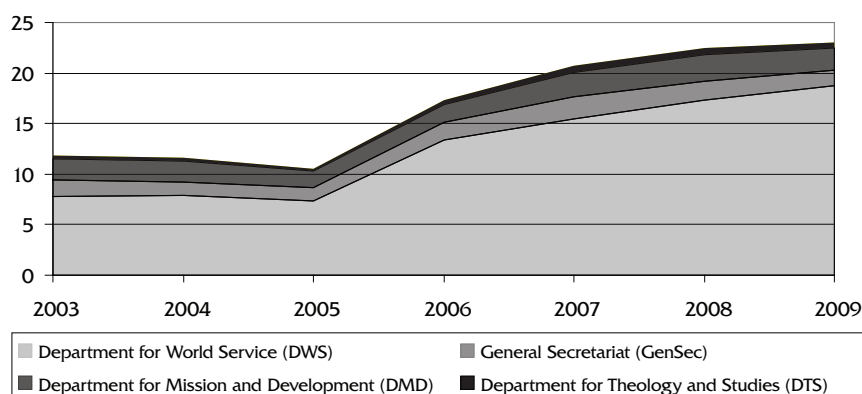
The following table shows the development of the reserves over the last several years. Due to the change in accounting principles during the period, the figures may not be fully comparable, but they still give a good picture of the situation.

The increase in reserves has occurred mainly in DWS, where there are sufficient funds compared to the risk, but not too high. In the other departments the reserves could be higher.

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### Development of Reserves 2003-2009 (Million USD)



### ETHICALLY REFLECTED INVESTMENT POLICY

LWF funds and reserves are invested according to financial and ethical criteria. The organization has an investment portfolio of approximately USD 65 million in four separate legal entities: the Geneva secretariat, the pension fund, the endowment fund and the Ecumenical Institute in Strasbourg. All investments in these entities are managed according to ethical principles approved by the Council in 2008. The purpose of these principles is to promote positive corporate social responsibility consistent with what we understand as God's intention in the world. God creates and sustains all that is, and calls us to seek justice, peace, dignity and sustainable communities for all. We do so as responsible stewards of what God has created and entrusted to us. How we invest our resources and hold companies accountable for their practices should reflect these faith convictions. Investments play an important role in societies, for good or ill. In today's global economy, the challenge is for both companies and individuals to ensure that the distribution of economic benefits is equitable, supports sustainable communities and preserves the

integrity of creation. The LWF does all this in cooperation with reputable partners such as the Ethos Foundation in Geneva.

### DWS OPERATIONAL RESULT

Another success story is the good operational results of DWS. During the last several years, DWS has been able to stabilize its financial situation due to the implementation of more systematized controls and monitoring. DWS has also

been increasingly accessing UN, governmental and private foundation funds through its enhanced resource mobilization capacity, so that about half of the department's income comes from non-church related sources. All these activities have helped to bring reserves to a satisfactory level. Deep gratitude is extended to the DWS management team for its hard work. However, there is no time to rest, as new challenges and risks emerge every day.

### ASSEMBLY BUDGET

The Eleventh Assembly budget is USD 2.3 million. This event is quite expensive. I hope that in the future the LWF will be able to coordinate assemblies together with other ecumenical organizations—not only for cost-saving reasons.

This time, the LWF entered into a cooperation agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg, according to which the Württemberg church takes care of the local logistics in Stuttgart. We believe that the financial outcome of this Assembly will be neutral for the LWF.



Attending the repentance service in Stuttgart's Old Reithalle were outgoing LWF General Secretary Noko, outgoing President Hanson and MWC President Ndlovu. Among the symbols on the altar were olive branches, a pine foot-washing tub, and an image of Anabaptist martyr Dirk Willems.

While there have been success stories since Winnipeg, some areas within the LWF's finances still need further attention.

## WHAT NEEDS FURTHER ATTENTION IN THE LWF'S FINANCES?

### FUNDRAISING

Fundraising must fit the very different contexts in the regions and in the member churches. Although there is a constant need for improvement in fundraising, we have to be aware that a successful way of doing fundraising in one church or country may not match the situation somewhere else.

Consequently, the LWF has developed a fundraising strategy with different measures for different contexts. This strategy needs to be reviewed and assessed regularly.

Fundraising is about motivating people or organizations to be part of something which is worthwhile. It is a big challenge to find new partners through fundraising. Therefore, it is very important to cultivate relationships with the existing partners. It is essential to raise funds for something that is important to potential donors. From our experience, it is much easier to raise funds for emergencies, rehabilitation, development and advocacy work than it is for theological and ecumenical work or interchurch cooperation. However, if the LWF is not able to finance these latter tasks, it runs the risk of becoming just another NGO. Are the member churches willing to maintain and finance these parts of the work of the secretariat in the future?

As mentioned earlier, joint global diakonia has been one of the trademarks and a strong pillar of the LWF from its very beginning. In order to uphold and renew this spirit and commitment in a changing global economic environment,

DWS needs more cooperation with the member churches in the South and in Eastern Europe. In DWS, churches have a precious instrument for their diaconal work reaching beyond their own borders. This is what communion is all about. Perhaps further improvement of communication could help to renew and widen the commitment of member churches to the global diaconal work of the LWF.

Ultimately, fundraising is a matter of delivering the best possible results. It is about added value, transparency, credibility and reputation. When we are able to be among the best in our area of work, we also get partners who are willing to work with us.

### ENDOWMENT FUND

The LWF Endowment Fund supplements the financial support provided for the work of the Lutheran Communion. The fund was established in 1999 with a long-term target of CHF 50 million. It has been growing gradually. The total funds at the end of 2009 amounted to CHF 11.8 million (USD 11 million). The next goal is to reach CHF 20 million by 2017. Some member churches have already pledged to donate their share.

Since its foundation, the endowment fund has donated CHF 2.5 million to the work of the LWF. Please visit the endowment fund stand here at the Conference Center and check how your church is doing. You can also speak with the endowment fund board members during the breaks and at regional meetings.

### LWF PENSION FUND

The LWF has its own small pension fund with 96 active members and 54 pensioners. During the financial crisis the financial status of the pension fund deteriorated substantially but during the last year the situation improved

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significantly. The coverage level of the pension fund is now approximately 100 percent. There is still some distance to go to reach the target level of 114 percent. The Pension Fund Board, of which the LWF treasurer is the chairperson, monitors regularly the coverage level and the number of members in the fund.

### GREATER SUSTAINABILITY OF THE LWF

The LWF also works to improve the sustainability of the member churches. I would like to put three questions to the new Council on the issue of improving the LWF's sustainability.

- Ecological: Will the LWF secretariat be ready for certification under the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) in the next years? EMAS is a management tool for organizations to evaluate, improve and report on their environmental performance.
- Social: What are the key challenges for further development of LWF personnel policies in Geneva and in country programs and regions?
- Financial: What would it take to make the LWF finances more crisis-proof?

### QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The LWF secretariat's annual budget is approximately USD 100 million (without the DWS associate country programs). This money has been entrusted to us for the healing of the world. We must be good stewards. Therefore it is necessary that the LWF secretariat provide high quality processes, programs and projects. Words like "quality," "accountability," "transparency" and "strategic" should be

part of our everyday communion vocabulary. So should "efficiency" and "effectiveness."

In the emergency and development community, there is more and more emphasis on having operational organizations that are internationally certified. DWS is part of a group of NGOs that are committed to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of aid by developing standardized systems for financial and operational reporting based on adequate accounting and accountability standards. In the future, funding streams will relate to compliant organizations being certified by standard-setting bodies rather than to specific projects and processes. Thus DWS is at the moment acquiring certain certifications.

I am convinced that one of the strategic emphases of the new LWF Council should be to ensure good quality management and pertinent operations for the whole secretariat. Perhaps the secretariat will be able to attain an International Organization for Standardization (ISO) quality certification in the coming years.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING: FROM A 2007-2011 STRATEGIC PLAN TO A ROLLING STRATEGIC PLAN

The current strategic plan for the LWF secretariat took two and a half years to prepare—from September 2004 to March 2007. While this was a learning experience for both the Council and staff, it was a time-consuming exercise. Given the fast pace at which changes are occurring across the world, few organizations can afford lengthy strategic planning carried out every five years or so. In the future, such extended processes should be avoided. The LWF needs to seriously consider having a rolling strategic plan that is reviewed annually, becomes integrated with the annual planning cycle and enables the Council to play an important role.

## DAY FOUR 23 JULY

In their reports to the Assembly (Plenary IX), women identified human trafficking, women in leadership and poverty as issues for attention; and youth called for attention to sustainability, gender justice and LWF visibility, and offered themselves as gifts to the communion. Public Hearing I called for action on "Daily Bread, Climate Change and Food Security." The evening was devoted to a celebratory evening dinner for outgoing LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko.



According to the proposed new LWF Constitution, “the Council shall define the strategy of the LWF according to decisions and actions made by the Assembly.” It might be a good idea for the new Council to have a workshop or a discussion on what “strategic planning” means in the context of the LWF. We need to be cautious: the LWF will not be able to sustain all its traditional programs.

### FUNDING FOR THEOLOGICAL AND ECUMENICAL WORK IN THE LWF

The Ecumenical Institute in Strasbourg is a separate foundation with its own budget and board. While the institute’s budget has been fairly stable in the past, the projection for 2012 is that there will be a dramatic decrease in funding.

The issues dealt with by the Department for Theology and Studies and the Office for Ecumenical Affairs in Geneva relate to those addressed by the Strasbourg institute. In addition, the Department for Mission and Development and DWS also deal with theological, ecumenical and interfaith matters in their daily work.

The Council in 2004 received a report on the funding of theological and ecumenical work in the LWF, which was prepared by the representatives of the units mentioned above. The conclusions of the report were as follows:

- Staff in the different units do not think that the current structures need to be changed.
- More funding is needed for the theological and ecumenical work of the LWF.
- Those proposing further changes, especially in the institutional ordering of this work, need to be aware of the complications involved and whether the advantages would outweigh the disadvantages.

- The Council should determine how LWF work in theology and ecumenism should be focused and carried forward.

Since 2004, no further discussion on this report has taken place in the Council. It seems that all units concerned have wanted to continue their work as before, despite the unfavorable funding projections. Given this scenario, the time is now appropriate for the Council and the Strasbourg institute board to undertake together a serious review of the LWF’s theological and ecumenical work, including the possibility of structural changes.

### AUGUSTA VICTORIA HOSPITAL IN EAST JERUSALEM

The Jerusalem program with Augusta Victoria Hospital on the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem is the biggest DWS country program. The annual budget of the hospital alone is approximately USD 13 million. In the mid-1990s, the hospital experienced great financial difficulties. Under the leadership of the current management team, the hospital has systematically developed unique and high-quality services for the Palestinian population and at the same time renovated the buildings. It has been amazing to follow how the hospital has been able to adjust to new funding situations and sudden political changes in the area.

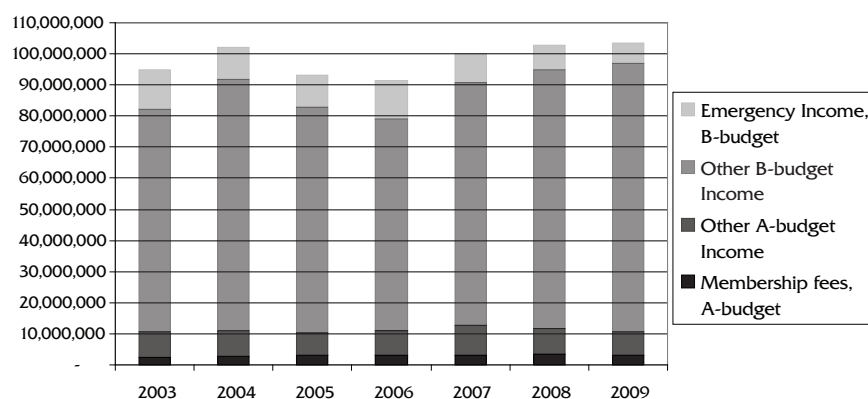
Because of its location, numerous activities and big budget, the hospital also carries certain financial risks. There is still an old renovation deficit from the 1990s amounting to USD 5 million. This deficit will be reduced by at least USD 200,000 per year. Secondly, the amount of income received from patient fees varies between USD 2-5 million. In order to secure its daily running costs, the hospital has been able to build up some buffer funds. In addition, a tax agreement with the Israeli government removed a big potential liability.

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Leading the women’s presentation were (from left) Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Switzerland and Liechtenstein President Dagmar Magold, LWF Council member Rev. Selma Chen of the Lutheran Church of Taiwan (Republic of China) and Rev. Elitha Moyo of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe.

Marc Villwock, Evangelical Church in Central Germany and Rahel Gysel, Lutheran Church in Chile, acted out their call for greater gender justice and sustainability.



**LWF Income 2003-2009 (USD)**

Although the hospital's finances seem to be stable currently, the situation needs to be constantly monitored.

### ACT ALLIANCE

The recently launched ACT Alliance will probably expand the potential of churches and related organizations to respond better to emergencies, increase collaboration in development work and provide a shared voice for advocacy. As one of the biggest partners in ACT Alliance, the LWF can provide high quality, efficient and effective services to the Alliance, which I am confident will contribute to a bright future for both organizations.

### FROM TREASURER TO CHAIRPERSON OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

The position of treasurer of the LWF is a voluntary position and not a full-time job; the full-time job with regard to the LWF's finances is carried out by the finance director,

Mr Pauli Rantanen. Nevertheless, supervising the finances of the LWF, chairing the Finance Committee of the Council and interpreting the financial situation to the Council requires certain financial expertise. This need for financial expertise will continue even with the planned constitutional changes.

According to the proposed new LWF Bylaws, the title and role of the treasurer will change; the chairperson of the Finance Committee will no longer have the same responsibilities as the treasurer did in the past.

For example, the chairperson of the Finance Committee will no longer be vice-president of his or her region.

The way things are done in the LWF need not only adjustment in the coming years, but also immediately.

### WHAT NEEDS TO BE ADJUSTED IN THE LWF'S FINANCES?

#### DEVELOPMENT OF FINANCES 2003-2009

The following tables show the development of income and expenditure from 2003 to 2009.

The total budget amounts to approximately USD 100 million per year. This does not include the budgets of DWS associate country programs totaling about USD 20 million annually. Most of the funds are designated by the donors for certain programs and projects. There is very little money available that can be allocated to programs and projects by the Council or LWF staff. This is a constant challenge for us.

© LWF/Luis E. Ramírez



During the last four years, the income and expenditures have increased, especially in DWS. However there has been a structural deficit for some years now in all the other departments. I first alerted the Council about this in my report in 2005. This structural deficit was not obvious during the good years with significant exchange gains. Ultimately there will come a time when there will no longer be exchange gains. The exchange gains in the last two years have been minimal.

Consequently, the structural deficit has become visible. Against this background, it is indeed the right time to restructure the secretariat in order to ensure that the necessary work can be carried out with balanced budgets in all units for many years to come. That does not mean that we should only adjust to existing financial realities; that would definitely be wrong. However, the restructuring must be linked to a clear, strategic reflection on: What is the LWF? What are our tasks in the world? What resources are available for this work? How can we make these resources available?

How shall we cover the structural deficits in the budgets of the departments?

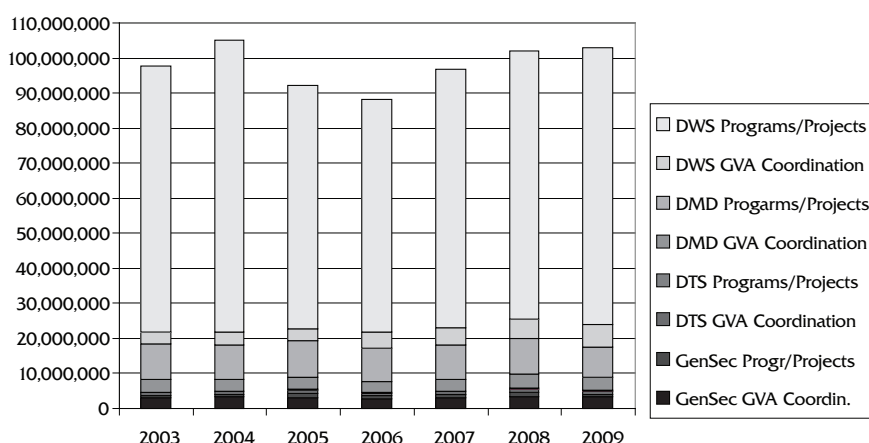
- Focusing – packaging differently, deepening existing relationships of cooperation, building new ones. It could help very much if the Assembly would set a limited number of directions for the LWF for the next period.
- Fundraising – necessary but may not be sufficient, taking into account the difficult

financial situation of the churches and their members after the financial and economic crisis over the last several years.

- Doing work more efficiently – this will help but what would certainly be more effective is to reduce the amount of workload put on the Geneva staff by the Assembly and the other governing bodies.
- Reducing expenditure by restructuring the Geneva secretariat following the proposals of the renewal process and under the leadership of the general secretary-elect – this would entail redesigning the structure and following budgets that are in line with the new strategic goals, and linking the Geneva coordination expenditure more clearly and transparently to the programs and projects.

The process of restructuring has to be guided by the incoming Council. The latter should be aware of some questions

**LWF Expenditure 2003-2009 (USD)**



Daily bread was the theme of German artist Anne Stickel's mural in a Brot für die Welt Assembly exhibit; singing after a public hearing on "Daily Bread, Climate Change and Food Security."



© LWF/Ratna Leak



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that the current Council has raised and which have not yet been answered:

- Would it be helpful to decentralize more of the secretariat's work to create more synergy with the resources of the member churches or regions?
- Could the secretariat or parts of it be located in a more cost-efficient location, taking into account the synergy in Geneva with other bodies at the Ecumenical Center and with Geneva-based UN organizations?
- Is there a need to restructure the seven LWF regions, the departments of the secretariat or other structures to work more efficiently and effectively?
- Are we ready to implement a new style of leadership within the LWF's governing

bodies and within the LWF secretariat that meets the changes happening at an accelerating speed?

## FINALLY

Our work as the Executive Committee and as the Council under the leadership of our president Bishop Mark Hanson, as the Finance Committee, and my work as the treasurer in the years since Winnipeg would not have been possible without the support of member churches, agencies, national committees and the staff in Geneva under the leadership of the general secretary, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko. I want to express my gratitude to all of them and especially to the finance director, Mr Pauli Rantanen, and his team for exceptionally good work in hard times. Please join me in giving them a big hand.





Falafel sandwiches prepared from a recipe in the LWF cookbook, *Food for Life: Recipes and Stories on the Right to Food* were among the homemade traditional dishes offered to Assembly participants at a social evening in Stuttgart's Schiller Square. © LWF/Luis E. Ramírez

# Letter to the Member Churches

We, the delegates of the Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, met in Stuttgart, Germany, from 20 to 27 July, 2010, under the theme, "Give us today our daily bread." We shared together a rich variety of experiences and perspectives which have deepened our relationships and strengthened our Communion.

This was a praying Assembly. At this first LWF Assembly with a prayer for its theme, the days were woven together by the Assembly hymn, inspired by this prayer. Each day, one word of this petition was highlighted in worship and Bible study. Through creative, multi-lingual liturgies of Holy Communion that expressed the faith we share, the diversity within our Communion could also be celebrated. In these times of worship we felt the deep inter-connectedness of our Com-

munion in ways that are possible on such special occasions.

The "daily bread" theme evoked discussions, particularly in village groups and public hearings, on food security, climate change, economic greed, illegitimate debt, human trafficking, HIV prevention, and gender justice.

"Today you have heard and honored our story." A high point of the Assembly was this response we heard from leaders of the Mennonite World Conference, as the Assembly asked forgiveness for violence done to Anabaptist Christians in Reformation times and its continuing legacies in Lutheran teaching. With us for this action were a cloud of ecumenical witnesses, who were a sign of the Body of Christ at this deeply moving moment. The experience of the power of forgiveness and

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reconciliation at this Assembly promises hope for the future with Anabaptists, but also as an example for other places where relationships are strained or broken. We returned to this spirit of repentance and forgiveness repeatedly in relation to a variety of issues throughout this Assembly.

Finally, we recognized the transitions which lie before us. Rev. Martin Junge, the General Secretary-elect, inspired the Assembly with his visions for the future of LWF. His forward-looking address was an important complement to the farewells we say at each Assembly, to Council members, staff and others who have become our friends over the time of their service. Approval of changes recommended for the renewal of the LWF allows us to move forward with a strengthened structure for the future.

We have been surrounded by the warm hospitality of our hosts in Germany and in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Württemberg. They have welcomed us with thoughtful-

ness, imagination and great care. To return to Martin Luther's own country again was significant as we prepare for the anniversary of 500 years of reform in 2017.

We are including with this letter a Summary of the Message of the Eleventh Assembly. We commend also to your attention the complete Message from the Assembly, and its Resolutions and Public Statements. In these documents the commitments of the Assembly can be more fully discerned. They are available on the LWF website, [www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org).

We leave Stuttgart with a sense of gratitude for what God has done through the LWF in its past and with prayers for its work in the future. We take home renewed commitment to the Communion and to one another.

To all of you around the world who could not be with us in the Assembly: you were daily in our thoughts and prayers. We ask now for your prayers also, that the work done at this Assembly bears rich fruit in the life of our Communion in the years to come.



Bishop Mark S. Hanson  
Outgoing President



Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko  
General Secretary



Bishop Terry Buck Hwa Kee, Lutheran Church in Singapore, proposes an amendment to the Assembly Message during a morning plenary session on the last day of the Assembly. © LWF/J. Latva-Hakuni

# Message from the Eleventh Assembly

“Give, give us, give us today, give us today our daily bread”—a thousand voices joined in this theme song at the LWF Assembly in Stuttgart. Here is our message.

## **GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD**

In a time of “grabbing and keeping,” we once again become aware that true humanity is found in receiving and sharing. “We love because he first loved us. Those who say, ‘I love God,’ and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also” (1 Jn 4:19–21).

The whole of creation is a gift and not our achievement. We start off our life by receiving: breath, nourishment, life itself.

As Christians we confess and affirm our dependence on God’s grace. God sustains us, grants us talents, intelligence, ingenuity. Through Christ, God gives us salvation; sets us free.

In as much as we depend on God, we also depend on others and others on us. Jesus himself set an example—not only did he give abundantly, he also received love and care in being anointed by the unnamed woman (Mk 14:3–9).

## **COMMITMENTS AND ACTIONS**

Knowing that in the act of sharing both givers and receivers can be deeply transformed, we commit ourselves to foster the awareness of receiving and the blessing of giving,

- by saying grace at meal time to testify that we are dependent on God's grace and giving
- by showing gratitude to our fellow human beings for what we receive from them
- by sharing the gospel of grace with the people around us, freely passing on what we have received
- by sharing not only our material goods, but also our knowledge and know-how with others
- by caring for the environment, which we do not own, so future generations may enjoy the fruits of creation and lead wholesome lives.

### GIVE **US** TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD

We are a community with fellow Lutherans and all Christians and, beyond that, with people of all faiths and none. Through Christ each one of us can relate directly to God, but as children of God we are bound to one another. Because of our interdependence we need to make every effort to communicate across linguistic and other barriers.

We acknowledge that we face brokenness on all levels: in our Lutheran and Christian world, between different faith traditions, between humankind and the rest of creation. However, as Lutherans we testify that reconciliation is possible in Christ. This was witnessed to in the profound expression of repentance and forgiveness between Lutherans and Mennonites in this Assembly.

As members of LWF, we each stand firm in our faith and heritage. With all our differences, we encourage each other to listen prayerfully to the stories and perspectives of others, seeking wisdom, theological knowledge and

factual evidence to illuminate our discussions and deepen our learning as communion.

Even though we long for agreement, we know that the basis of our communion is not shared opinion, but shared faith.

Jesus showed us that each one—woman, man and child—is equally valuable and important before God. As a communion that rejoices in its diversity and recognizes this equal humanity:

- We acknowledge that our own policy of gender justice is only partially implemented. We need further reflection and implementation. We believe that in order to be a legitimate and credible voice for gender justice in society, the church must first achieve gender justice within its own structures and practices. Churches should be ahead of their time in granting women and men the opportunity to develop and use to the full their God-given gifts. Realizing gender justice changes and re-values the roles of both men and women; new roles in churches for both may shift traditional roles in society.
- We emphasize the inclusion of persons with disabilities in church and society.
- We oppose all types of human trafficking and modification of the human body.
- We emphasize that children's needs vary: some suffer physical starvation and abuse, others spiritual starvation and neglect. Still others become victims of human trafficking or are forced to become child soldiers. Many societies fail fully to recognize children's rights and needs. When we put the rights, needs and welfare of children at the centre (Mk



At a special dinner tribute to Dr Noko, vice-president for Africa Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta conveyed greetings from the region; a quilt made by women church members was a gift from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.



9:36), we have a future much brighter than we can imagine.

- We reject the oppression of and discrimination against people for reasons of ethnicity, nationality or caste. We express our support for the Dalit communities in their hopes and aspirations for a new tomorrow.

## COMMITMENTS AND ACTIONS

- We ask for gender education to be included in all theological study.
- We ask all churches to recommit to gender and generational justice and inclusiveness. Box-ticking is never enough.
- We ask the LWF and all member churches to facilitate exchanges for the sake of more widespread positive exposure to women in lay and ordained leadership.
- We refer to the resolution on human trafficking and relevant actions called for by this Assembly.
- We endorse the message from the youth pre-Assembly on the topic of sex education.
- We call for LWF and all member churches to make the rights and welfare of children a priority for future theology and action.
- We commit ourselves to continuing the dialogue with the Mennonites and the LWF and its member churches.

## GIVE US **TODAY** OUR DAILY BREAD

“The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God” (Rom 8:19). When people are transformed by the gospel, creation breathes a sigh of relief, and communities flourish. Where the gospel takes root, creation benefits.

We highlighted several issues that are of burning relevance today, as they have been for several yesterdays:

- Food justice: Recognizing adequate and nutritious food as essential to life, we are painfully aware that while large portions of the world population are impoverished and hungry, in other instances forty percent of food gets thrown away uneaten. This denies the fact that food is precious. The answer is not to fill empty bowls with cheap charity, but rather with the costly pursuit of justice for the sake of this and future generations. Direct support of the hungry and marginalized has to be combined with development and education. Our work has to empower people to fend for their own rights and live in dignity.
- Climate change: We are aware that the window of opportunity for the reduction of greenhouse gas is shrinking. We realize that those who are most to blame often feel the least affected. As one consequence of this global crisis, some indigenous people are at risk of losing their ancestral land and culture.
- HIV and AIDS: We recognize that the body of Christ is infected and affected; the church is both part of the problem and part of the solution. The churches’ silence or ill-advised recommendations have contributed to the ongoing spread of the pandemic. At the same time, churches are instrumental

© LWF/Hans Kasch



in providing information and education that result in effective prevention.

- We recognize that in today's world migration and issues connected with it are increasingly posing a challenge to social cohesion and political systems.

We acknowledge the large amount of work that has been done in some of these areas. We anticipate a time when we no longer need to speak about such issues each day.

### COMMITMENTS AND ACTIONS

- Food justice: We refer to the resolutions and actions of this Assembly.
  - As we are only beginning to understand the extent of the issue, our first priority should be to educate ourselves about the dynamics of food production and distribution in a globalized world.
  - We ask the member churches to be actively involved in diaconal work with those suffering from food injustice and support the work of the LWF Department for World Service.
- Climate change: We refer to the resolutions and actions of this Assembly.
- HIV and AIDS: The rate of infection continues to exceed the rate of increased access to treatment. Hence the following actions are all of paramount importance.
- Churches are asked to maintain the awareness of the disease, counteracting stigma and marginalization

and ensuring the inclusion in church and society of those infected.

- Prevention, treatment and care must be given equal priority. We call on all churches to consider how best to act on prevention of HIV transmission in their specific contexts.
- Political commitment to achieve universal access to treatment is waning. We call on all governments to fulfill the promises they have made in this regard. This will enable people with HIV to live full and productive lives for the benefit of society.
- The churches are invited to pursue their commitment to welcoming migrants who have emigrated for political, economic or climatic reasons.

### GIVE US TODAY OUR **DAILY** BREAD

The world we live in is God's ongoing creation of which we as creatures are a part. For our living, we rely on basic gifts that we cannot produce such as the atmosphere, fertile soil and clean water. We are creative creatures, capable of developing skills and inventing technology to improve our lives as well as to jeopardize them.

Jesus says, "I have come that you might have life in abundance" (Jn 10:10). As Christians we are called to be good stewards of God's creation and to share its gifts equitably. However, we have been polluting, exploiting and destroying God's creation, therefore decreasing biodiversity and causing the basic necessities of life to deteriorate.

We are acutely aware of the environmental, social and economic unsustainability of many current patterns of behavior and practices in our global village. Our context



today fails to provide a balance between these three pillars of sustainability. The ongoing global financial and economic crisis has shown us serious concerns regarding the unconstrained accumulation of wealth of the few at the expense of the many.

Illegitimate debts, incurred by unscrupulous lenders and borrowers, have plunged countries into deep financial crises, which are a major cause of hardship in affected societies.

Greed is a sin that contributes to current unsustainable practices and systems, and therefore must be confronted. It also fuels the injustice between rich and poor; between developed and developing countries and communities. We as Christians and churches repent of our complicity in this greed-driven culture.

## COMMITMENTS AND ACTIONS

Through our repentance and the forgiveness promised to us by God, as well as our daily rebirth in our baptism, we are strengthened to work for the renewal and rebirth of creation. Therefore we commit to promoting alternatives to prevailing economic systems so that God's gifts may be distributed in a more sustainable and just manner. In accordance with the resolutions of the LWF Assembly we call on LWF and all member churches to give attention to concrete actions such as:

- consistent ethical investment policy and practice
- purchasing policy that is responsible ecologically and socially
- carbon dioxide neutral event management
- ecologically sound means of transportation

- sustainable practice in the ownership and use of land and buildings
- good and transparent governance
- sustainable management practices.

Furthermore we call upon the LWF and its member churches to

- advocate for the cancellation of illegitimate debts
- promote sustainable development
- raise awareness on environmental issues.

We look to a future where all share in the daily bread.

## GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Give us today our daily bread. *"What does this mean?... Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like"* (Luther's *Small Catechism*).

The sacramental sharing of bread and wine obliges us to care for the daily bread of our societies (1 Corinthians 11:17-34). As a communion of small and large churches, we recognize that we fulfill the obligation of feeding the world physically and spiritually in various ways, for instance through preaching the gospel, education and

During the evening, Dr Noko was showered with gifts, and participants were entertained by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe Betseranai Choir as well as by a slide-show depicting special moments in Dr Noko's life.



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capacity building, social and political diakonia, advocacy, and effective communication

In an increasingly multicultural world, the need for dialogue and working together (diapraxis) grows more urgent daily. The fruits that are harvested from ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and diapraxis depend on the depth of knowledge and immersion in our own tradition. Being well grounded in our faith tradition enables us to be open, receptive, and hospitable to others.

We acknowledge that the climate crisis and issues of sustainability make dialogue and diapraxis between people of different faith traditions essential and may provide an impulse toward greater mutual understanding. This comes to expression in common advocacy and action.

We expect the LWF and its member churches to speak up loudly and prophetically.

Going out with this message, trusting the Triune God, we proclaim:

As we face rising waters, hunger, and displacement,

God suffers with us.

As we mourn the distress and wounds of God's creation,

God weeps with us.

As we struggle for justice,

God struggles with us.

As we expose and challenge climate injustice,

God empowers us.

As we are troubled by divisions in and between our churches,

God challenges us to become what we already are in our baptism.

As we, in the light of the gospel, discover the reforming power of diversity and tension,

God inspires us to repentance, reconciliation, and renewal.

As we dare to face the challenges of giving and receiving, of sharing,

God creates God's people into newness.

(cf. *God, Creation and Climate Change*, p. 129)





Using bowls of olive oil from the Holy Land, congregants in a special “Service of Repentance” made the sign of the cross on each other’s hands. © LWF/Arni Danielsson

# Action on the Legacy of Lutheran Persecution of “Anabaptists”

**Note:** Below is the statement approved by the Council of The Lutheran World Federation in Chavannes de Bogis (Geneva) in October 2009 and adopted at the VIIth Plenary Session of the LWF Eleventh Assembly on 22 July 2010

When Lutherans today realize the history of Lutheran – Anabaptist relationships in the sixteenth century and beyond as it is presented in the report of the Lutheran – Mennonite International Study Commission, they are filled with a deep sense of regret and pain over the persecution of Anabaptists by Lutheran authorities and especially over the fact that Lutheran reformers theologically supported this persecution. Thus, The Lutheran World Federation, A Communion of Churches wishes to express publicly its deep regret and sorrow.

Trusting in God who in Jesus Christ was reconciling the world to himself, we ask for forgiveness—from God and from our Mennonite sisters and brothers—for the harm that our forbears in the sixteenth century committed to Anabaptists, for forgetting or ignoring this persecution in the intervening centuries, and for all inappropriate, misleading and hurtful portraits of Anabaptists and Mennonites made by Lutheran authors, in both popular and scholarly forms, to the present day.

We pray that God may grant to our communities a healing of our memories and reconciliation.

We commit ourselves:

- to interpret the Lutheran Confessions in light of the jointly described history between Lutherans and Anabaptists;

- 
- to take care that this action of the LWF will bear fruit in the teaching of the Lutheran Confessions in the seminaries and other educational activities of our member churches;
  - to continue the exploration of unresolved issues between our two traditions, in particular baptism and relations of Christians and of the Church to the state, in an atmosphere of mutual openness and the willingness to learn from each other;
  - to affirm the present consensus, gained by the experience of our churches over the centuries, in repudiating the use of the state's power either to exclude or enforce particular religious beliefs; and to work

towards upholding and maintaining freedom of religion and conscience in political orders and societies, and

- to urge our international bodies, member churches, and in particular our congregations, to seek ways to continue and deepen relations with the Mennonite World Conference and with local Mennonite communities through common prayer and Bible study, shared humanitarian engagement, and common work for peace.

Recommended by the LWF Council, October 2009, for approval by the LWF Eleventh Assembly, July 2010.



# Mennonite World Conference Response to the Lutheran World Federation Action on the Legacy of Lutheran Persecution of Anabaptists

*Given by President Danisa Ndlovu (photo, right)*

Martin Luther and the Anabaptists called this practice of the early Christians the “rule of Christ.” We find it in Matthew 18, one of only two places in the New Testament where Jesus uses the word *ecclesia*—“church.” Both times his subject is “binding and loosing.” More specifically, in this instance, Jesus teaches about granting forgiveness while reestablishing communion in the community of disciples.

“Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’ Jesus

said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy times seven’” (Matthew 18:18-22 NRSV).

Today in this place, we together—Lutherans and Anabaptist-Mennonites—are fulfilling the “rule of Christ.”

Today in this place, we together—Lutherans, Anabaptist-Mennonites, and other Christians—are living out a basic and essential meaning of church: binding and loosing; seeking and granting forgiveness; restoring and healing relationships in the body of Christ.

To God be the glory!

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Trusting in God who in Jesus Christ was reconciling the world to himself, you have taken this action on the legacy of the persecution of

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Anabaptists in which you ask for forgiveness from God and from Anabaptist-Mennonite sisters and brothers. You seek forgiveness:

- for the harm that your forbears in the sixteenth century committed to Anabaptists;
- for forgetting or ignoring this persecution in the intervening centuries; and
- for all inappropriate, misleading and hurtful portraits of Anabaptists and Mennonites made by Lutheran authors to the present day.

Are we worthy to receive your request? We are painfully aware of our own inadequacy.

We cannot bring ourselves to this table with heads held high. We can only come bowed down in great humility and in the fear of the Lord. We cannot come to this point and fail to see our own sinfulness. We cannot come to this point without recognizing our own need for God's grace and forgiveness.

At the same time, we are profoundly moved by your spirit of repentance and by your act of seeking forgiveness. And we remember the prayer of George Blaurock, the first Anabaptist—baptized on January 21, 1525, in Zurich (Switzerland); burned at the stake on September 6, 1529, in Klausen (Austria).

While in prison Blaurock wrote these words:

I sincerely pray for all my enemies, O Lord, however many there may be. Do not lay their sins to their charge. Lord, I entreat this according to your will.

We believe that God has already heard and granted this Anabaptist prayer. We believe that today God has heard your confession and is granting your appeal for forgiveness. We joyfully and humbly join with God in giving forgiveness. In the spirit of the "rule of Christ," we believe that what we are doing together here today on earth, God is doing also in heaven.

To God be the glory!

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Trusting in God who in Jesus Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not only have you sought forgiveness for past acts, you have demonstrated the integrity of your initiative by making specific commitments to new action. We gratefully acknowledge these commitments. In response:

- We commit ourselves to promote interpretations of the Lutheran-Anabaptist story

which take seriously the jointly described history found in the Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission Report;

- We commit ourselves to take care that your initiative for reconciliation is known and honoured in Anabaptist-Mennonite teaching about Lutherans;
- We commit ourselves to continue with you deliberation on the unresolved issues between our two traditions, in a spirit of mutual vulnerability and openness to the movement of the Spirit;
- We commit ourselves to encourage our member churches, their local congregations, and their institutions to seek fuller relations and greater cooperation with Lutherans in service to the world.

To God be the glory!

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During the Last Supper, Jesus said to his disciples:

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35).

He also gave them a physical, embodied demonstration of this new commandment:

"Jesus (...) got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him" (John 13:3-5).

Some Anabaptist and Mennonite churches have maintained the practice of foot washing. This wooden foot washing tub comes from one of them. We offer it to you as a sign of our commitment to a future when the distinguishing mark of Lutheran and Anabaptist-Mennonite relationships is boundless love and unfailing service. We will learn to seek one another's good from a posture of voluntary and mutual submission. For it is in our vulnerability to one another that God's miraculous, transforming, reconciling presence is made visible in the world.

To God be the glory!

Mennonite World Conference  
22 July 2010  
Stuttgart, Germany





Congregants in the special “Service of Repentance” © LWF/Arní Danielsson

# Service of Repentance

THE COSTS OF PERSECUTION  
AND ITS LEGACIES

**TESTIMONY 1:**  
**FRIEDER BOLLER, CHAIRPERSON,**  
**ASSOCIATION OF MENNONITE**  
**ASSEMBLIES IN GERMANY**

Barbara Unger was a young mother of four children. With others, she chose to be baptized in 1529. That was her YES to following Jesus and her YES to living with brothers and sisters in visible community. They wanted to be a community incarnating the Body of Christ—where daily life demonstrated the practical effects of justice, non-violence and love of their neighbor.

She and the others who were baptized were prepared for what might come.

“Anyone who wants to be a proper Christian must leave behind all they possess and suffer persecution until death” they were warned.

No, martyrdom was neither sought nor glorified at the time. It was only lived and accepted as the unavoidable consequence of their witness. That was rooted in the confidence: “Who will separate us from the love of Christ” (Rom 8:35)?

Barbara Unger was executed, with others, in Reinhardsbrunn, Thuringia, on 18 January 1530, barely 18 months after her baptism.

There is plenty of documentation that those persecuted had already forgiven their tormentors. They did so in the spirit of the Lord’s Prayer and that Jesus had prayed, “Forgive them, for they do know not what they are doing.”

And yet the blood witnesses in those times also remind us of Jesus’s words: “See, I am

sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves” (Mt 10:16).

Today we see ourselves seriously confronted with the awkward question:

“What would I be ready to die for?”

What are we willing to give up—for heaven’s sake? What do we live and work for to the last?

The witness of Anabaptist and other martyrs challenges us today—in our post-Christian or non-Christian societies—to live as the Body of Christ. They point us to Jesus.

He exhorts and encourages us to live in the community of God’s shalom, to speak prophetically in this world, to be non-violent in our actions, to serve others and to bring about reconciliation.

And not least to invite others to join us and accompany them as we follow Jesus together.

### TESTIMONY 2:

**THEODOR DIETER, DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR ECUMENICAL RESEARCH STRASBOURG, AND CO-SECRETARY OF THE LUTHERAN – MENNONITE INTERNATIONAL STUDY COMMISSION**

Lutherans today recognize and deeply regret that Luther and Melancthon theologically supported the persecution and even execution of Anabaptists—against their own earlier insight that conflicts of true and false doctrine had to be overcome by the word of God, not by the sword. Lutheran reformers accused Anabaptists of being seditious since they denied that Christians could hold an office of temporal authority, even though most of the Anabaptists strictly refused to use violence. Moreover, Lutheran reformers regarded the Anabaptist understanding of baptism, especially their refusal to baptize infants, as blasphemy, which had to be punished by capital punishment according to the

1000-year-old law of the Roman Empire. For this Lutherans appealed to the Mosaic Law, even though Martin Luther had formerly declared a direct appeal to the Old Testament to be theologically illegitimate. The reformers did not have a precise and differentiated perception of Anabaptists; nevertheless, they drew sharp consequences from their limited understanding of the movement. In defending the gospel, the reformers in this case chose strategies that contradicted this very gospel. Therefore Lutherans who continue to adhere to the foundational insights of Lutheran Reformation fittingly ask Mennonites for forgiveness for the Reformers’ misperception, misjudgment and misrepresentation of the Anabaptists and all the harm that originated from them.

### TESTIMONY 3:

**LARRY MILLER, GENERAL SECRETARY, MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE, AND CO-SECRETARY OF THE LUTHERAN – MENNONITE INTERNATIONAL STUDY COMMISSION**

From the beginning of the movement, as you have heard, Anabaptists interpreted their persecution as a confirmation of faithful Christian discipleship. Over the centuries and around the world, stories of faithful suffering became a vital shaper of Anabaptist-Mennonite identity.

In 1660 a Dutch Mennonite pastor compiled these accounts into this influential book, the *Martyrs Mirror*. Second only to Christ as example here is Dirk Willems. Imprisoned for his beliefs, Willems escaped and fled across an icy pond. A soldier chasing him fell through the ice and called out for help. Willems returned to rescue his drowning pursuer. His compassion allowed his recapture, and he was executed.

Yet even as we actively treasure these memories as models, we acknowledge that such remembering, through

## DAY FIVE 24 JULY

Following the final report of the Credentials and Nominations Committee (Plenary X), the Assembly proceeded to elect 48 new Council members and Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan as the new LWF President (Plenary XI). Illegitimate debt, and HIV and AIDS were the focus of a two-part public hearing (Public Hearing 2); an outdoor evening meal for Assembly participants in the Schillerplatz underscored the universal right of all people to food security.



the centuries and into the present, has come with a price. In our conversations with you and others we have come to see the costs more clearly.

At times, our versions of martyr stories have reduced complex history to simple morality tales of good and evil, in which historical actors are either Christ-like or violent.

At times, we have remembered Lutheran reformers primarily for their arguments and actions against Anabaptists, thereby minimizing the broader theological contributions of these reformers to the Christian church and, indeed, to our own movement.

At times, we have claimed the martyr tradition as a badge of Christian superiority. We sometimes nurtured an identity rooted in victimization that could foster a sense of self-righteousness and arrogance, blinding us to the frailties and failures that are also deeply woven into our tradition.

We too are communities in need of healing and forgiveness. In this action between us there is, for Anabaptist-Mennonites also, the promise of release and renewal.

Lord, help us to remember rightly. Lord, inspire us to speak truthfully. Lord, enable us to walk humbly.

## SEEDS OF RECONCILIATION AND PEACE

### TESTIMONY 1: EDUARDO MARTÍNEZ, PRESIDING BISHOP OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF COLOMBIA

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

During the Regional Latin American and Caribbean LWF Pre-assembly we met with the Mennonite Church brothers and sisters in Colombia, and while we expressed

our wish to ask them for forgiveness for the religious intolerance of Lutherans in the past, I realized the meaning of this act of reconciliation between churches in the context and situation we are living in our country.

Colombians have long suffered violence, largely due to the inability of many to tolerate ideological, political or religious differences.

The act of reconciliation of two churches which recognize the importance of healing wounds of the past in order to be able to live in peace in the present gives a message of vital importance to our society. In order to advance firmly in the construction of a sustainable peace, we need to reconcile ourselves departing from the recognition of the errors we have made as society in the past and in the present.

### TESTIMONY 2: MICHAEL MARTIN, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT “ECUMENICAL AFFAIRS AND CHURCH LIFE”, EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN BAVARIA, GERMANY

Mennonites and Lutherans held intensive conversations from 1989 to 1992. They came closer theologically and extended a mutual invitation to the Lord’s Supper. A further outcome of the dialogue was a statement by Lutherans “concerning the condemnations of the Augsburg Confession of 1530 directed against the Anabaptists.” This affirmed that the doctrinal condemnations of the Reformation period against the Anabaptists are not relevant to today’s Mennonite churches. They then confessed their guilt in two joint services in 1996, and asked for forgiveness—as we are doing here today in Stuttgart for our worldwide communion.

It was clear at the time that we could not simply alter the historical text of the *Confessio Augustana* of 1530. But

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After stewards had collected election ballots; in afternoon plenary session, Bishop Dr Solomon Rajah, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia & Mabbel Mandigi.

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the point was to state that the condemnations contained in the Augsburg Confession do not apply to today's partners in dialogue.

This affected the inclusion of the *Augsburg Confession* when we were re-editing the hymnal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria. The introduction to it now reads: "Thanks to the doctrinal dialogues held between the different churches up until the present, the condemnations no longer reflect the current state of relations among the churches and faith communities."

We do not intend to play down the historical wrongdoing. However, this interpretative comment on our *Augsburg Confession* is meant to reflect the change in relations between our churches. In face of the suffering of the past, we can now go our way together in reconciliation—praising God and testifying to God's good message of peace, hope and love.

**TESTIMONY 3:**  
**SUSAN C. JOHNSON, NATIONAL**  
**BISHOP, EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN**  
**CHURCH IN CANADA AND JANET**  
**PLENERT, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**  
**(WITNESS), MENNONITE CHURCH**  
**CANADA, AND VICE PRESIDENT**  
**OF THE MENNONITE WORLD**  
**CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Janet: When I heard Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko speak in front of 7,000 Mennonites at our global Assembly in Paraguay last summer, I

knew this would be an important agenda for both our churches in the coming years.

Last year a 3,000 Canadian dollars surplus in a small rural Canadian Mennonite congregation resulted in an invitation to the local Lutheran congregation to plant a field of grain together. The project grew, and received matching funding, and 130,000 Canadian dollars were donated collaboratively to help the hungry in the world, to share daily bread.

Susan: Our churches have worked together for many years through ecumenical forums in the areas of advocacy for peace and justice and in relief and development. Now we feel a call to deepen this relationship.

In anticipation of this day, we have begun joint work on a congregational resource to be used by both our church families. This will help us learn about our shared history and this apology, and most importantly, begin to forge new ways of collaboration as a reconciled part of the body of Christ.

Janet: In Canada, we will host a series of regional events for joint study and worship. The first will be hosted by Conrad Grebel University and Waterloo Lutheran Seminary this November.

God is giving us a new heart and a new spirit.

Susan: We are confident that we will be blessed, and we pray that we may be a blessing to others. Thanks be to God!





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# Adopted Resolutions

The Assembly

**VOTED: to adopt the resolution regarding gender justice**

Text of the resolution as adopted:

## BACKGROUND

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Matthew 5:6).

In their pre-Assembly [p. 91] and in meetings prior to regional pre-assemblies, women members of the Lutheran World Federation reflected on issues related to living out the gospel. Now it is time for the full body of Christ, the full communion, to stand together

and denounce the sinful effects of pervasive patriarchal culture and to challenge all forms of domination. It is only through men and women working together in this way that the perspectives and gifts of women may be fully embraced in all levels of the church.

Women’s leadership in churches and society, human trafficking, and unequal food distribution are the issues on which we all cry out for righteousness. Let us raise our voices, seeking solidarity, respect, companionship and change in order to bring justice.

Consistent with the biblical message of being created in the image of God (Gen 1:27) and taking into consideration the previous declarations of the Lutheran World Federation (especially at the Seventh Assembly, Budapest; 1984; the Eighth Assembly, Curitiba, 1990; the communiqué “The ongoing reformation

of the church: the witness of ordained women today,” Geneva, March 2008; the LWF Council meeting of October 2009, “Resolutions and actions”; and *Lutheran World Information* 12/2009) we call for change in the world and, in particular, within our own churches.

We lift up the positive contributions in ministry and ecclesiology that women, in ordained ministry, offer. The full integration of ordained women into the life of the church implies shared power and service based on a theological understanding of ministry and the establishment of structures which are accessible and hospitable.

We recognize that the lack of full participation of women in churches and the LWF communion is a theological issue which must be addressed by the communion and its member churches.

## **ASSEMBLY ACTION**

We call on the Assembly to urge member churches to re-commit to genuine, practical and effective implementation of LWF policies and decisions regarding the full participation of women in the life of the church—and of the LWF communion—as well as in society.

We call on member churches to set appropriate legislation and regulatory policies that enable and ensure women in leadership positions—ordained and lay—and the opportunities to pursue theological education. We ask that churches who do not ordain women prayerfully consider the effect that inaction and refusal on this matter has on those who are precluded from exercising their God-given calling because they are women. The pain of exclusion and the loss of God-given gifts are experienced by the whole church.

We call on member churches and the LWF secretariat to include gender analyses, as biblical and theological tools, in all aspects of the life of member churches in the communion, including diaconal and advocacy work.

We ask for a clear action plan for the development of contextualized gender policies that may be implemented on all levels in the member churches and be mandatory for the LWF secretariat. We call on the Council to develop and approve such a guiding process.

We call for the support of women leaders, lay and ordained, particularly women bish-

ops and presidents, as vital members of the communion.

We call for the LWF and its member churches to make a clear stand against domestic violence, acknowledging every person’s right to feel safe and respectfully treated, also when in their own homes.

We ask the Council to have the issue of gender justice as a standing item on its agenda. Because there is an imbalance between male and female youth at this Assembly, the Council should pay special attention to this.

The Assembly

**VOTED:** to adopt the resolution regarding human trafficking

Text of the resolution as adopted:

The church is called to engage in advocacy and awareness programs, including appropriate self-awareness about human sexuality, to develop strategies in order to overcome ignorance and to denounce the sin of human trafficking.

## **ASSEMBLY ACTION**

We ask the LWF and its member churches to support and provide comprehensive sex education in order to empower all women and men to take responsibility for their own bodies and sexuality.

We ask the communion to provide leadership, in preaching, teaching and other forms of public witness against the commercial exploitation of human beings.

We ask the communion to counter the negative devaluation of female bodies, developing resources and materials in local languages.

We ask the LWF to expressly denounce the commercialization of the human body, particularly the bodies of women and children, in the media.

We ask the communion to facilitate the construction of partnerships and cooperation between church and society working for legislation that will protect persons liberated from being trafficked, and playing roles in

bringing about cultural transformation and the elimination of trafficking.

The Assembly

**VOTED: to adopt the resolution on priority for liberation and the restoration of human dignity for Dalits**

Text of the resolution as adopted:

## BACKGROUND

We gratefully acknowledge the President of the Lutheran World Federation, Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, for his solidarity and support for us, the Dalits, in our hopes and aspirations for a new tomorrow.

We are indebted to the Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko for his clarion call to the Eleventh Assembly to strive together to make the life-changing prayer “Give today our daily bread” a reality in its fullness.

This historic Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation is taking the bold initiative of breaking down the walls of separation, and thereby transforming Mennonite-Lutheran relations into streams of harmony.

## ASSEMBLY ACTION

We request that the LWF make the liberation and restoration of human dignity of the 250 million oppressed and discriminated Dalits in India, Nepal and southeast Asia one of the priorities of the mission, work and witness of the Gospel of Jesus, the liberator.

The Assembly

**VOTED: to adopt the resolution on global priorities**

Text of the resolution as adopted:

## BACKGROUND

### *Global Priorities Initiative*

A new international initiative, global priorities, links nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation to a wider set of objectives.

It reframes the challenge of disarmament by connecting cuts in nuclear weaponry to the well-being of the world’s children, thereby redoubling global efforts to address child hunger, health and education.

The 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in New York underscored the need to create a global compact reaching across political divisions and involving civil society. Deep cuts in nuclear arsenals offer an opportunity to create additional funding at this time of economic uncertainty to address needs that have been neglected over many years. These cuts must be pursued both to enhance international security and to improve global child survival and the well-being of future generations.

For the past twenty-five years, political leaders have urged drastic reductions in the nuclear arsenals of the US and the Russian Federation, starting in 1986 when presidents Reagan and Gorbachev came close to agreeing on the elimination of nuclear arms. A current bipartisan US Congressional measure, H. Res. 278, the Global Security Priorities Resolution, introduced by Democratic representative Jim McGovern and Republican representative Dan Lungren, argues for an intermediate reduction in US and Russian arsenals to 1,000 deployed nuclear warheads and a total of no more than 3,000 weapons on each side, to be achieved in the near future. Equally important, H. Res. 278 addresses the purposeful use of savings created by reductions in the nuclear arsenals.

After World War II, the Marshall Plan, an economic recovery initiative of the USA, not only rebuilt the lands of European allies but was extended to former enemies as well. In the pattern set by these efforts, H. Res. 278 and similar measures give us an opportunity to shift national and international priorities. Unmet human needs can be addressed with savings from the reduction of nuclear weapon inventories of the US, the Russian Federation and other nuclear powers. This can mitigate some of the root causes of violence and reduce the reliance on nuclear weapons.

The annual costs of maintaining the US nuclear arsenal alone at present levels are estimated to be close to USD 50 billion. Even if a saving of only ten percent of that were to be achieved in the early years of reductions, this would create a significant source of income for child survival and human development programs. Connecting nuclear weapon reductions to the well-being of

children throughout the world could help combat sympathy for terrorism while facilitating broader international collaboration among nuclear and non-nuclear nations. In poor nations, such as Somalia, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen and Afghanistan, poverty and hunger are a scourge on human development. A program directed at poor communities and fragile states, derived directly from savings brought about by deep cuts in nuclear inventories, would have a salutary impact on international peace and security.

A United Nations resolution, to be introduced later this year, would help set the stage for specific international measures of this nature in the years ahead. The resolution would establish a firm link between the reduction of nuclear arsenals and humanitarian efforts worldwide. Utilizing funds made available through disarmament, programs could be conducted through UNICEF and agencies doing similar work to address global child survival and related nutritional, health and educational needs of children.

Furthermore:

Approximately 25,000 children around the world die every day from preventable causes.

The USA and the Russian Federation in April 2010 signed the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty agreement, are aiming to extend strategic arms reduction agreements and aim to consider paths to further reductions as well as strengthening verification measures.

A study by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace cited a US Department of Defense estimate that at least USD 52 billion was spent in 2008 on nuclear weapons and weapons-related programs in the United States alone.<sup>1</sup>

The USA and the Russian Federation possess ninety-five percent of the world's nuclear weapons.

International health experts estimated in 2005 that an additional USD 5.1 billion a year in global assistance for proven child survival interventions could save the lives of 6 million young children each year.<sup>2</sup>

Practical ways must be found to reduce unproductive military spending and increase effective spending on human needs.

The first of a series of international petitions is currently underway, developed by eminent experts and based in part on US House of Representatives Resolution 278, the Global Security Priorities Resolution, introduced on a bipartisan basis on 24 March 2009, calling for deep reductions in US and Russian nuclear arsenals, saving at least USD 13 billion annually in the US alone, with some of the savings from these reductions directed toward a well-targeted international effort aimed at addressing the Millennium Development Goals of reducing child mortality and eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.

This international petition and related instruments are to be endorsed by religious, arms control and humanitarian leaders to help create the basis for a United Nations resolution to help set the stage for a concrete international process and measures to greatly reduce nuclear arsenals with savings directed toward addressing child mortality, child poverty and hunger.

International defense experts agree that such international measures would enhance global security by reducing the nuclear threat as well as address vital issues of the well-being of children living in poverty at a time of global economic crisis.

More than two dozen churches and other religious organizations endorsed the Global Security Priorities Resolution in 2010.

The Global Priorities Campaign, an international, interreligious initiative that developed this international petition, is facilitating practical ways to reduce military spending and increase spending to meet human needs, was bestowed a "Blessed Are the Peacemakers" award in December 2008 by the US Conference of the World Council of Churches for its efforts to promote these objectives.

## ASSEMBLY ACTION

Therefore, be it **RESOLVED** that, the Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation,

- Commend the bold leadership shown by the Global Priorities Campaign,
- Call upon its member churches to co-sponsor and otherwise assist the Global Priorities Campaign international petition effort and to support subsequent international processes and measures of this nature,

<sup>1</sup> Stephen I. Schwartz with Deepti Choubey, *Nuclear Security Spending Assessing Costs, Examining Priorities*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Jennifer Bryce, Robert E. Black, et al., "Can the world afford to save the lives of 6 million children each year?" *The Lancet*, 365 (9478): 2193-2200.



- Call upon its member churches to consider additional ways it may sustain the efforts of the Global Priorities Campaign toward these ends, and
- Call upon the general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation to transmit this message to the member churches.

The Assembly

### **VOTED: to adopt the resolution on poverty and food justice**

Text of the resolution as adopted:

Poverty has a woman's face. We acknowledge the chasm that separates those who suffer from famine and deprivation, and those who consume too much. When we pray, we acknowledge that food is a gift from God, and ask that it continues to sustain our daily life.

### **ASSEMBLY ACTION**

We encourage member churches to engage in advocacy campaigns directed toward governments that their actions, commitments and attitudes on poverty and food justice as it relates to women and children might be strengthened. We ask the LWF to assist in information sharing and in the formulated targeting of these strategic partnerships.

We firmly ask the LWF to work for poverty alleviation, food justice and economic justice and to connect member churches with one another and with civil society efforts on many levels, particularly in common acts toward long-term sustainable change, for worldwide improvement in livelihood and increase the right to food for all.

Overall, we call for the raising up of gender justice in church and society, food justice, economic justice and the struggle against human trafficking from this point onward, and particularly during the 2017 Reformation commemorations as a sign of the ongoing reformation we are called to today.

We regard all of these issues to be issues for all members of the communion and the body of Christ.

The Assembly

### **VOTED: to adopt the resolution regarding the mining industry**

Text of the resolution as adopted:

Many countries that remain dependent on foreign aid are rich in natural resources such as petroleum, gas, minerals, forests and water. The extractive industries are pivotal for development since two-thirds of the poorest in the world live in countries rich in resources. Nevertheless, revenues from those resources are often not invested in the fight against poverty and sustainable development. Only a small portion of the profits of these national resources are mobilized in order to reduce poverty and promote development. Member churches of the LWF likewise witness people in the mining areas who barely benefit from these natural resources and who are indeed becoming even poorer. In many countries, industry is subject to minimal governmental and popular democratic scrutiny and regulation. A fair tax system can contribute positively to reducing a government's dependency on aid and strengthen accountability to its citizens.

The impact of large scale mining on the local environment is a further concern because the health-related quality of land and water is critical for the local population to flourish. Mining is destructive to the natural environment around mines, creates waste rock disposal problems, and uses harsh chemicals, all of which can be significant sources of waste and cause harm to both workers and nature. When water and soil in the mining areas are polluted, people are affected and lose their livelihood. The situation in many areas of the mining industry today causes serious harm to human life and human dignity.

### **ASSEMBLY ACTION**

In line with this assessment the LWF Assembly calls upon:

- The LWF General Secretariat to accompany member churches to support and encourage one another to seek national legislation in order to secure public revenues, good environmental standards, ensure public participation by stakeholders, and fair access to and fair distribution of resources.

- The member churches to strengthen and expand their advocacy for greater accountability and corporate social responsibility of corporations in natural resources and in those industries which utilize natural resources.
- The member churches to support efforts to fight corruption and ensure greater transparency in extractive industry and in those industries which utilize natural resources.
- The member churches to advocate for a fair, democratic and transparent global financial system, and new international accounting standards, which would require companies to report on their profits, expenditures, taxes, fees and community grants paid in each financial year on a country-by-country basis in order to avoid improper internal pricing and tax evasion.
- The LWF to engage in capacity development of member churches on resources and finance, in order to strengthen their role as advocates for transparency and accountability on revenues and national resources.

The Assembly

### **VOTED: to adopt the resolution regarding inclusiveness in the Lutheran World Federation**

Text of the resolution as adopted:

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2009, the LWF Council, meeting in Geneva, adopted the following resolution:

To ask the General Secretary to prepare a draft for a document on gender and youth participation in the LWF structures for appropriate action by the Assembly in order to fulfill the resolution adopted by the LWF Assembly in Winnipeg 2003 that reads: “to request the new Council to clearly define the policy on gender balance in order to secure a common understanding in all regions for future assemblies.”<sup>3</sup>

The LWF has had a long history of including women and young people in its work and structures. In 1984, landmark decisions on the participation of women and lay persons were made by the Seventh Assembly at Budapest, Hungary.

On the participation of women,

The Seventh Assembly RESOLVED:

6.1 To request the LWF Executive Committee:

6.1.1. To develop a plan that would, with the co-operation of the member churches and the national committees, become effective at the Eighth Assembly and provide that 40 per cent of the delegates at the Eighth LWF Assembly be women, and that 50 per cent of the delegates at the Ninth and all subsequent LWF Assemblies be women.

6.1.2 To give consideration to preparing a representation formula that will provide:

6.1.2.1 That the membership of the LWF Executive Committee, the commissions, and the appointed advisory/governing committees, each and separately, be comprised of at least 40 per cent women and at least 40 per cent men.

6.1.2.2 That of the Officers as a group at least 40 percent be women and at least 40 per cent be men, and that regional representation be considered in their selection.

6.1.2.3 That the membership of the LWF Executive Committee be at least 40 percent lay and at least 40 percent clergy.<sup>4</sup>

On the participation of young people,

The Seventh Assembly RESOLVED,

7.1.5 That a balanced key be utilized to decide upon delegates for the next Assembly and that at least 20 per cent of the delegates be youth. Of particular concern is the regional balance of delegates under 30 years of age. Staff of the Youth Desk are to be involved in the discussion of and decision making on the new guidelines.

7.1.6 That a young person at LWF meetings and Assemblies normally be under the age of 30.

7.1.7. That there be one young person as a full member of each of the LWF commissions; that these young people be experienced in Lutheran youth work; and that geographical factors be taken into account.”<sup>5</sup>

As standing resolutions, these texts are considered governing documents of the Lutheran World Federation (cf. Bylaws 10.3).

<sup>3</sup> The Lutheran World Federation, *Minutes of the Meeting of the LWF Council, Geneva, Switzerland, 22–27 October 2009*, 13.5, p. 34, para. 225.

<sup>4</sup> Carl H. Mau (ed.), Budapest 1984. In *Christ–Hope for the World. Proceedings of the Seventh Assembly*, LWF Report 19/20 (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1985), 224.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 229.

Twenty-six years after implementing the Budapest resolutions, further clarifications are needed. Following discussions with the LWF general secretary and Cabinet, the following text will be submitted to the Constitution Committee, for recommendation to the Eleventh Assembly for its action:

## STANDING RESOLUTION ON INCLUSIVENESS

On the occasion of the birth of the church at Pentecost, Peter quotes from the prophet Joel, “In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” (Acts 2:17). Both males and females, both young and old are fully included in the church already (cf. also Gal 3:28), yet measures are needed to ensure that their voices and perspectives are fully represented, heard and included in the church and its decision-making processes.

Since its inception, but especially since the 1984 Budapest Assembly, the Lutheran World Federation and its member churches have been committed to witness to this new reality in Christ by reflecting this in their decision-making bodies and programs. Inclusiveness has become a Lutheran expression of what it means to be the church. Yet ongoing processes of critical ecclesial formation are necessary if we are to live out this inclusiveness. Through numerical goals, we hold ourselves accountable to the inclusiveness we seek. Numerical representation is not an end in itself, but a means for helping us to become a more inclusive communion. Besides numbers, the quality of the participation of women and youth and lay people continually needs to be developed and enhanced. The quality of our life together and the perspectives of the whole communion are enriched when the body becomes more inclusive of all its parts (1 Cor 12).

## ASSEMBLY ACTION

As a further step in this ongoing journey, the Eleventh Assembly adopts the following principles of inclusive representation, and encourages member churches to adopt similar measures to ensure full participation in their respective contexts. The current quota system has proven to be an important tool that enables participation of women in all the decision-

making bodies, bringing the diversity which enriches our communion.

The Assembly requests the general secretary to: evaluate the quota system since its introduction; review commitment to and implementation of the quota system (youth, lay and ordained, male and female, etc.) on all levels (governing bodies and its elected officers); report on the quota system to the LWF Council about the implementation of the principles of inclusive representation by the LWF as well as the member churches.

This resolution is adopted as a governing document of the Federation (cf. Bylaws 10.3).

The Assembly

**VOTED:** to adopt the resolution regarding LWF principles of inclusivity

Text of the resolution as adopted:

## 1. GENDER BALANCE

The LWF Assembly, Council, Officers, and all other committees and task forces, including at all regional levels shall be composed of at least forty percent women and at least forty percent men. And that the gender quota is respected also among youth representatives.

In all activities that it organizes at all regional levels, the LWF shall respect this basic principle, and LWF staff shall encourage those with whom it cooperates to do likewise.<sup>6</sup> The basic principle also applies to executive staff in the LWF communion office.

## 2. GENERATIONAL BALANCE

The LWF Assembly, Council, Officers and all other committees and taskforces, including at all regional levels shall be composed of at least twenty percent young people under the age of thirty at the time of the first meeting of the body to which they have been appointed. Regional balance shall be respected.

<sup>6</sup> Acknowledging the existing challenges, meetings and activities in which the basic principle has not been applied are not to be declared invalid, but their non-compliance with the basic principle shall be formally recognized and actions to improve need to be planned.

If there is more than one youth representative on a governing body, gender balance among the youth representatives shall be respected on all regional levels.

This basic principle shall apply to all activities of the LWF communion office.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. BALANCE OF LAITY AND CLERGY

The LWF Assembly, Council, Officers and all other committees and taskforces, including at all regional levels shall be composed of at least forty percent lay persons. Gender and regional balance among the non-ordained members shall be respected.

The Assembly

**VOTED: to adopt the resolution regarding promoting sustainable practices**

Text of the resolution as adopted:

#### ASSEMBLY ACTION

In light of the commitment of the LWF to environmental sustainability, it is requested that the LWF adopt a full environmental policy for its work and meetings. That the LWF prepare for certification under an international ecocertification system and audit scheme (EMAS), by 2012. In the environmentally friendly planning of the meetings and assemblies to revert to the experiences of the German Evangelical Kirchentag. This policy will incorporate the measures already taken regarding the reduction of the carbon footprint of the LWF, such as the CO<sub>2</sub> emission compensation system and the reduction of the number of printed documents.

The Assembly

**VOTED: to adopt the resolution regarding inclusivity and proposed delegate lists for future assemblies**

Text of the resolution as adopted:

#### ASSEMBLY ACTION

The Eleventh Assembly requests the new Council shall develop bylaws which would permit it to reject those proposed delegate lists from the regions for the LWF Assembly which are not in keeping with the established inclusivity principles of this communion.

The Assembly

**VOTED: to adopt the resolution regarding climate change**

Text of the resolution as adopted:

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

The LWF Eleventh Assembly:

- recognizes that a) climate change is an increasingly urgent challenge requiring an effective global response within an inexorably diminishing window of opportunity, bearing in mind that global emissions must peak no later than 2015 if potentially catastrophic global warming is to be avoided; and b) disasters, such as the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, demonstrate that safety and clean-up technologies have not kept pace with the increasing environmental risks associated with the extraction and exploitation of fossil fuels;
- highlights the grave impacts on food security that are already being felt in many parts of the world as a result of changing climatic patterns, to which the LWF and its member churches are witnesses;
- endorses the relevant resolutions adopted by the LWF Council in 2008 and 2009, and calls for the directions outlined therein to continue to be pursued by the LWF and its member churches;
- deeply regrets the failure of the 2009 United Nations Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in December 2009 to establish a fair, equitable, legally-binding and verifiable agreement to succeed the Kyoto Protocol, and calls on the

<sup>7</sup> Acknowledging the existing challenges, meetings and activities in which the basic principle has not been applied are not to be declared invalid, but their non-compliance with the basic principle shall be formally recognized and actions to improve need to be planned.



international community to commit to achieving such an agreement at the 2010 UN Climate Change Conference in Mexico (November–December 2010);

- calls on all governments to show more decisive leadership in responding to climate change and in moving beyond reliance on fossil fuels for energy needs, and regrets the failure of the Senate of the USA to take the needed urgent action on the pending bill on climate change;
- urges all LWF member churches advocate with their governments for:
  - Measures to ensure that global greenhouse gas emissions peak no later than 2015 and then decline rapidly toward a target of less than 350 ppm atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentration
  - Urgent action by developed countries to reduce their carbon emissions by forty percent of the 1990 levels by 2020
  - The establishment of a just and adequate means of financing climate change mitigation and adaptation in the countries of the developing world; and
- Asks the LWF general secretary, member churches and LWF country programs to consolidate and enhance their efforts to address the impacts of climate change on development and poverty in the most vulnerable communities, and to raise up the voices of indigenous communities and their perspectives on environmental ethics.

The Assembly

**VOTED: to adopt the resolution regarding the inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups in central eastern Europe**

Text of the resolution as adopted:

In light of the theme of the Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation—A Communion of Churches—the delegates from the Central Eastern European region would like to direct special attention to the socially disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities in our context. It is especially the Roma minority

whose members suffer from food insecurity, lack of resources, unsupportive structures and marginalization. The social tensions resulting from this situation have the potential of destabilizing the whole continent. We see it as the role of the churches to contribute to the empowerment and integration of socially disadvantaged ethnic groups as well as to the development of socially inclusive practices. Ministry among the Roma people has already been established and some projects are being carried out. Nevertheless, much more effort is needed if the problem is to be effectively addressed.

## ASSEMBLY ACTION

**We, therefore, ask the LWF to consider the inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities (especially the Roma people) in society and the church as a priority and initiate social and educational programs aimed at the development and facilitation of such groups at the regional level.**

The Assembly

**VOTED: to adopt the resolution regarding the indigenous people**

Text of the resolution as adopted:

A great majority of indigenous people live in ancestral lands, mostly rural, but a series of factors—such as poverty, soil degradation, colonization, and the interests of national and international companies—are resulting in the loss of their lands, languages and traditions and their right to a dignified life.

Despite all of this, native peoples have resisted until today, and the nations of the whole world recognize their existence, the environmental wisdom, social harmony and their resistance against oppression.

The Lutheran World Federation has already, at its Assembly in Winnipeg in 2003, recognized the contribution of the native people—adopting a resolution on indigenous peoples. And the LWF has agreed to take relevant actions. The LWF arranged a consultation in Karasjok, Norway, September 2006, under the theme “An Indigenous Communion.” A series of supporting actions were decided to be developed in the upcoming years. Since that time, no specific indigenous program has

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been established, as foreseen at the Tenth Assembly and the Karasjok consultation.

### **ASSEMBLY ACTION**

Therefore, the Eleventh Assembly reaffirms the commitments made to the indigenous peoples at the Tenth Assembly in 2003 and the LWF's consultation on indigenous people in Norway in September 2006. The Assembly asks the secretariat and the member churches to follow up on these proposals.

The Assembly

**VOTED: to adopt the resolution regarding advocacy for people with disabilities**

Text of the resolution as adopted:

### **BACKGROUND**

True fellowship, both in society and church, consists of all kinds of people. This is not only a matter of theology, but also human rights.

### **ASSEMBLY ACTION**

The Lutheran World Federation renews its commitment to the cooperation with the

World Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Disabilities Advocates Network (EDAN) to strengthen advocacy for the inclusion, participation and involvement of persons with disabilities in spiritual, social and development life, both in the church and society.

The Assembly

**VOTED: to adopt the resolution regarding a virtual resource center**

Text of the resolution as adopted:

In light of the LWF's commitment to sharing resources, talents and abilities to empower its member churches all over the world to grow and prosper and to educate leaders and their congregations, especially children and young people, a need for inspiration and new ideas as well as ready-to-use materials has been encountered.

### **ASSEMBLY ACTION**

The Assembly recommends that a virtual resource center or bank be set up by the LWF, accessible to all through the Internet, to alleviate the needs that exist in many churches. Many churches have educational materials (educational in its broadest sense) which, by sharing them with one another, can be of inspiration and thus be helpful for others.



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# Statements

The Assembly

**VOTED: to adopt the Public Statement on “Daily Bread” instead of Greed: an LWF Call for Economic and Climate Justice**

Text of the public statement as adopted:

**PUBLIC STATEMENT ON “DAILY BREAD” INSTEAD OF GREED: AN LWF CALL FOR ECONOMIC AND CLIMATE JUSTICE**

## INTRODUCTION

The 2003 LWF Assembly declared that:

As a communion, we must engage the false ideology of neoliberal economic globalization ... (which is) grounded in the assumption that the market, built on private property, unrestrained competition and the centrality of contracts, is the absolute law governing human life, society and the natural environment. This is idolatry and leads to the systematic exclusion of those who own no property, the destruction of cultural diversity, the dismantling of fragile democracies and the destruction of the earth.

Since 2003, many have lost their means of livelihood, their life savings and their sense of a viable future. Promises of unlimited economic growth, fueled especially by carbon consumption, are jeopardizing the planet's future and the future of life as we have known it—especially the lives and lands of those who are the most vulnerable in the world. Climate change is accelerating, as

made evident through increasingly severe and frequent storms, rising seas and devastating droughts. It also contributes to more severe food shortages, the increased spread of diseases, conflicts over scarce land and water, and the forced migration of people.

As a communion, we have already addressed many manifestations of these crises, locally and globally, and in collaboration with ecumenical and civil society partners. Over the past year, the member churches of the LWF have been on a pilgrimage in many places: We witnessed the dramatic effects of climate change from the time of the encounter in Puri, India to the African consultation on climate change, food security and poverty in Nairobi, Kenya. At various pre-assemblies in preparation for the 2010 LWF Assembly, we heard how especially women and children, bear the burden of food shortages, and of the many ways in which an unjust economic system impoverishes the most vulnerable parts of the suffering creation.

Recently, global financial crises and environmental disasters have dramatically exposed the underlying scandalous greed—of seeking profit through any means, and at the cost of our fundamental humanity. As a faith-based organization, it is crucial that the LWF communion speak to greed, which at its root is a deeply spiritual matter (cf., Luther's discussion of the First Commandment in the Small Catechism). Systemic greed dominates, enslaves and distorts God's intentions for human communities and for all of creation. This is in direct contradiction to the petition "Give us today our daily bread," which is based on the conviction that there will be "enough for all."

Thus, at this 2010 Assembly,

we testify to what we see and hear in light of biblical and theological perspectives, we name the central theological convictions at stake, and we commit ourselves to work for the changes needed in our lives, churches, societies and the world. As churches, we may feel powerless to confront or challenge these contradictions, but if we succumb to this domination of sin and hopelessness, we betray the faith we confess.

***As a global communion, we bear witness to how "daily bread" and "greed" clash***

We hear the cries of those who are desperate for enough "bread" so that they might live for yet another day, as well as the silent cries of those who are "dying" spiritually from having accumulated "too much bread."

We glimpse many persons, including youth, who are hidden in our communities who, in the hope of getting the "daily bread" they need to survive, feel compelled to submit their labor and their bodies to being exploited by those greedy for profit and pleasure.

We hear the complaints of young people who face a future without jobs that can support them and their families, and the laments of older workers who cannot leave their jobs because without them they would be deprived of what they require in order to live.

We see many people who lack the basics to sustain life—food, health, shelter or security—while some leaders reap big bonuses and live in luxury, and seem unable to break the political gridlocks needed to implement policies and provide resources needed to ensure "daily bread for all."

We feel people's sense of panic when financial markets and banks collapse, undermining the economic security people have counted on, but also the false hopes generated as these institutions are rescued, even while the economy that provides jobs and livelihoods still falters.

We are alarmed that in most countries, a small percentage of the population owns nearly all the financial assets, such that financial gain becomes a form of idolatry instead of God's will of "daily bread for all."

We deplore the fact that billions can be found to rescue big banks and financial institutions, but not the financial resources needed to sustain those around the world who continually lack "daily bread."

We deplore the global speculation on food commodities that sharply raises the cost of food, making it more insecure for at least a billion people.

We see how the land, animals and people are dying as drought conditions become more severe, accelerated by the fossil fuel emissions of distant companies that pursue ever-greater profit at the cost of the common good.

We experience increasingly unpredictable weather patterns, altering the planned growing seasons essential for cultivating the food that we need.

We hear people telling us of how their villages have been washed into the rising sea, proof that climate change, accelerated by greedy deforesting and mining practices, is very real.

We observe that large business interests, whose practices are harming communities and creation, often have undue influence over governments.



We decry that ever more advanced technologies plunge into previously unknown depths or heights for the sake of ever greater profits, without adequately accounting for risky ethical consequences, and lead to tragedies of catastrophic proportions that devastate natural habitats and human livelihoods for many years.

We deplore that, instead of church leaders speaking out to challenge and change the way in which systemic patterns and policies of greed are ruling our world, often proclaim and model a gospel of prosperity or are complicit with the ways of empire, especially in pursuing gain at the expense of others, rather than being consistent advocates of “daily bread for all,” as Jesus himself modeled and taught.

### **SYSTEMIC GREED IS A SPIRITUAL MATTER OF IDOLATRY**

While there are complex factors and analyses involved in each of the above examples, the underlying issue is excessive, personal, systemic and structural greed, which is not only a social, economic, and political scandal but also a deeply spiritual problem.

Greed haunts each of our societies, as well as our churches, when decisions are made and actions are taken that benefit a few at the expense of the many. The systemic greed built into the logic and practices that permeate our lives and world is in direct contradiction with the heart of the prayer—“Give us today our daily bread.”

As Christians, we cannot pray this petition without protesting the many ways in which greed prevails over the generosity for all which this prayer affirms. The dominant economic model today is based on assumptions of scarcity—in opposition to the biblical view of enough for all. The overexploitation of natural resources is based on assumptions of endless plentitude—in opposition to the biblical view that human beings are to be the stewards or caretakers of God’s creation. The interrelated crises we face today have come about because human beings have reversed and thus violated both of these divine mandates in Genesis.

Instead of a sense that “God will provide what we need,” what prevails today is a perverse sense that nature will provide according to the dictates of boundless human greed. Nature today is protesting this. Tragically, the people and lands most dramatically affected usually are less at fault than are wider forces, policies and developments to which the people and lands most vulnerable to climate change are captive. The lands and peoples most devastated are not

those that draw the attention of the media. Such tragedies are driven by quests for ever-higher profit and economic growth, fueled by greed. Greed has led to practices such as deforestation and the extraction and burning of fossil fuels against which nature is revolting.

To a large extent, economic crises are evoked by practices of inordinate greed in quest of ever-greater financial gain. In a reversal of biblical values, greed has become acceptable, taken for granted and encouraged as necessary for economic recovery or prosperity.

We must name and denounce the practices, systems, assumptions and logic underlying and perpetuating these contradictions or injustices. In doing so, we are inspired and emboldened by the biblical witness, by Jesus and by our forebears such as Luther.

The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah cried out, “From the least to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely. They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying ‘Peace, peace,’ where there is not peace” (Jer 6:13). According to the prophet Ezekiel, the great sin of the people of Sodom was that they were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned, and “did not aid the poor and needy” (Ezek 16:49).

In the gospels, Jesus drew a stark contrast between the logic of God who provides “daily bread” and that of humans seeking economic gain at the expense of others: “You cannot serve God and wealth (mammon)” (Mt 6:24; Lk 16:13). The early Christians were urged to be on their guard against all kinds of greed (Lk 12:15), to flee from it (1 Tim 6:11) or to kill it (Col 3:5). In the early church, Basil the Great referred to the greedy as those not satisfied with what suffices for their needs, and who do not share what they have with others.

Martin Luther spoke out against sinful systems and practices that oppressed and impoverished people. He clearly said “No” to practices of the banking and trading companies of his time: “... they will not change. If the trading companies are to stay, right and honesty must perish. If right and honesty are to survive, the trading companies must perish” (WA 15, 313; LW 45, 272.). He was referring not only to a few greedy individuals, but to the system and assumptions upon which it was based, which divorced making money from meeting human need and required some to acquire ever more.

As a Lutheran communion, we are called to speak out against similar systemic injustices in our day, because related crises of faith still are at stake. In the sixteenth century, the crisis was

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over the gospel that frees people from the fear and bondage of sin, which became embedded in systems needing to be challenged. Today, people are in fear and bondage over the greed embedded in the economic system and over what the future will hold, unless dramatic changes are made for the sake of global economic and environmental justice.

While greed has been prevalent throughout human history, under modern neoliberal capitalism, the virus of insatiability (never having enough) has turned into a general epidemic. All aspects of life tend to be valued in terms of their monetary worth or potential financial gain. Greed often hides under a mask of good intentions and practices of respectable people. In fact, a certain amount of greed is considered “good”—necessary for a market economy to function. In this sense, greed has become systemic—built into the reigning reality which people go along with. In order to function within this system, individuals are socialized to become greedy. Although some individuals may seem particularly greedy, focusing only on them can keep us from seeing how the various systems in which we all participate are what perpetuate and legitimize patterns and practices of greed. Greed is a part of us; it is not just “out there.”

Systemic greed is an expression of the domination or bondage of sin that is expressed through the theology of Paul (e.g., Rom 6) and Luther. It becomes the idol, for which persons, communities and the rest of creation are sacrificed. Money and financial markets take on a life of their own—with the creation of an endless variety of new financial instruments for making quick, hyper-profits. More than just a medium of exchange, money has become a commodity from which ever larger profits are promised and expected. When these promises are betrayed—as when the system collapses—the undergirding idolatry is exposed.

Operating within this system, frantic attempts to rescue financial systems and ecosystems turn to tools, technologies or approaches consistent with the logic, which in some cases make matters worse. Language is used to obfuscate the greed involved, in ever increasingly sophisticated ways that even experts cannot understand, much less responsibly regulate. If politicians propose measures to regulate or rein in the craftily devised means for achieving greater profit over others, they may be punished by declines in the stock market. The real economy of jobs and what is needed for daily life has increasingly become captive to the gyrations of the virtual economy of finance and trading, the reigning god in our world today.

## **ASSEMBLY ACTION**

### *Responding as churches*

As churches we confess that we too are caught up in these realities. We too live in the grip of a relentless pursuit of unlimited progress and prosperity that all too often is fueled by greed. Church leaders sometimes lack transparency and obfuscate unjust practices. We too seek advantages for ourselves at the expense of others. We too live under the reign of sin.

Yet at the same time, we also live under the reign of God’s grace, compassion, justice and generosity. Instead of remaining captive to the principalities and powers reigning in this world, we are liberated by Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to resist the inner logic of personal and structural greed. Living out of this Christian freedom rather than out of fear, we are able to lift the veil from our eyes to see, unblock our ears to hear, and unleash our wills to act. We face these crises with a sense of God’s indwelling, abiding presence, which empowers us to speak and act.

We recognize that negotiating the tension between the two reigns—of grace (“daily bread”) vs. greed—is the ongoing struggle of discipleship. In our churches we call for teaching and preaching that clearly names the tensions operating in their respective contexts, and for ongoing spiritual formation that enables people to deal with these tensions in their own lives.

We will name, analyze and publicly denounce the domination of capital accumulation over people and earth in the present economic and political system as well as blatantly greedy practices of large businesses and financial institutions, and call them to account for the consequences of their actions, including through the inter-relationships we share with others in the communion.

We will advocate with governments and inter-governmental organizations for the development and enforcement of adequate regulations of financial transactions, trade and investment, which—if unrestrained—expedite greed at the expense of the most vulnerable.

We recognize and will speak out against the ways in which economic and environmental injustices are inter-related. For example, there must be drastic reductions in carbon-based consumption

for the sake of reducing global warming trends, through measures that share the responsibility globally. Those who have contributed most to the problem should bear most of the cost for adaptation and mitigation, especially for the sake of those in the world who are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The world's wealthiest nations must assume responsibility for the ecological debt they have created, and for the disasters that perpetuate carbon colonialism in the developing world.

We will engage with those of other faiths, and with the rest of civil society in efforts to subvert structural greed and develop alternatives that are life-giving and sustaining for all.

The Assembly

# **VOTED: to adopt the Public Statement on Illegitimate Debt and the International Financial Crisis**

Text of the Public Statement as adopted:

## **PUBLIC STATEMENT ON ILLEGITIMATE DEBT AND THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CRISIS**

Gathered at the Eleventh Assembly and seven years after the Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg where a Public Statement on Illegitimate Debt was issued, we note that debt, now aggravated by the crisis originated in the wealthier industrialized countries, remains a major obstacle to the eradication of poverty and the achievement of fundamental human rights for all people. The debt burden has had a significant impact in parts of Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia.

The results of the instruments by which the international financial institutions (IFIs) have faced the issue of debt have been wrong or limited. Relief initiatives for poor countries, while benefiting a few, in most cases have had meager or even negative effects, as these initiatives have been linked to harmful economic conditionalities and to asymmetrical power relations. Moreover, beyond their technical weakness, these instruments are mistaken in their approach, as they concentrate exclusively on the *sustainability* of debt and not on its *legitimacy*.

Debt, and the financial system on which it is based, the same that caused the cur-

rent crisis, not only block the development potential of millions of human beings, but their very survival: the bread that we ask for all humanity in the prayer Jesus taught us is a reality for fewer and fewer people. This is a matter of ethic and moral condemnation and as churches we cannot remain indifferent.

However, over the last years, we have seen many signs which encourage us to continue our efforts and help foster the necessary changes to overcome the current situation and make progress toward a new international financial architecture based on justice and law.

Among these encouraging signs it is important to mention:

- The Norwegian government's initiative unilaterally and unconditionally to cancel the debt of five countries on the basis of its co-responsibility;
- The sovereign decision of the Government of Ecuador to conduct a comprehensive audit of the public debt;
- The International Symposium on Illegitimate Debt (Oslo, October 2008). It was organized by the LWF, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and the Church of Sweden, and brought together representatives of governments, churches and United Nations agencies along with university professors and prominent movement leaders and civil society organizations;
- The debate at the UNCTAD and its proposal for responsible lending and illegitimate debt; and
- The progress in social and political acceptance of the concept of illegitimacy and the growing awareness that sovereign borrowing and debt are not just a matter of finance and economics, but of politics, law, justice, and ethics.

In this context it is necessary to:

- Continue to develop the concept of illegitimate debt in the light of useful criteria that can be found, along with other sources, in the academic scientific production and the work of UNCTAD and other organizations.
- With the vision to start a new financial structure that serves human beings and not

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be served by them, encourage the creation of international legislation to control the conditions of loans and credits. This legislation should include the principle of shared responsibility of borrower and lender to ensure that all credit and loan operations will benefit the host population.

- Ensure an efficient system of audit of all sovereign credit transactions.
- Implement a full and active participation of the population of the borrowing countries in every contract of indebtedness. This must be done through legal mechanisms in each country, ensuring the right to free and full information on contracts and obligations.

## **ASSEMBLY ACTION**

Therefore the Eleventh Assembly urges all the churches of the Lutheran Communion as well as the LWF to:

- Assume, with courage and decision, the role that the churches should have about the ethical and moral guidance on issues such as foreign debt and economic governance;
- Sustain and deepen the commitment made with reference to illegitimate debt incorporating reflection and analysis on the effects of the current international financial crisis and the causes that motivated it;
- Promote and give impetus to, both ecumenically and with other civil society actors, the conduct of audits, verification of contracts, censuses of creditors, and all the necessary mechanisms to help expose and obtain the annulment of all illegal or illegitimate debts;
- Challenge all governments and all public and private lenders to accept and implement the principle of shared responsibility as a fundamental issue of justice and to express this in their regulatory frameworks;
- Promote the right to information together with the recognition of the indispensable role of civil society in mobilizing political will, and in the proposal and supporting

of legal interventions related to the illegitimate debt;

- Promote, by all means available, the request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice about debt and its regulatory framework in international law. This is a necessary action that will help establish legal frameworks to govern credit and debt both past and future; and
- Undertake the essential task of advocating for the construction of a new international financial architecture developed on the basis of justice, respect for human rights and the environment.

The Assembly

**VOTED:** to adopt the Public Statement on the Deaths at Duisburg ‘Love Parade’

Text of the Public Statement as adopted:

## **PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THE DEATHS AT THE DUISBURG “LOVE PARADE”**

### **ASSEMBLY ACTION**

The Eleventh Assembly of The Lutheran World Federation, meeting in Stuttgart, expresses its profound sympathy to the families of those who died on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July in Duisburg at the entrance to the “Love Parade” dance music festival. This terrible incident, which resulted in 19 deaths and left more than 340 people injured, has shocked and saddened the church leaders attending the LWF Assembly from 79 countries around the world.

As we prayed in our Sunday services in different congregations around Stuttgart, we continue to pray for the consolation of the bereaved families of those who died, and for the swift recovery of those who were injured—physically and psychologically—in Duisburg. We hold up those who responded to the emergency, saving lives and helping the injured. And we pray that the tragic lessons of that day will be studied and learned, so that future tragedies might be avoided. We pray for all the victims worldwide.





In an afternoon plenary, Bishop Naison Shava, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, proposes an amendment to an Assembly resolution on food justice. © LWF/ J. Latvia-Hakuni

# Eleventh Assembly Matters Referred to the LWF Council

The Assembly

**VOTED: to refer to the Council**

Text of the resolution as referred:

## PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

In light of the commitment of the LWF to environmental sustainability, it is requested that:

- the LWF commit further in its efforts and actions in a number of areas, in order for the LWF to live up to its stands on environmental sustainability;
- the LWF hold an experimental, virtual meeting of executives during the next four years

in order to explore the feasibility of using virtual meetings, thereby saving economical and environmental resources. We ask the Council to make recommendations that would ensure that profound efforts are made to hold future assemblies in an ecologically and economically sustainable manner.

- the Communion purchase and promote fair trade and sustainable products. Likewise, we request that the LWF be certain to use food, snacks, coffee, gifts and so forth, whenever possible, which have been produced under fair conditions—often associated with the Fair Trade Certification.
- tap water be served instead of bottled water whenever the quality of the tap water allows it;

- locally and organically produced food be served during meetings and assemblies;
- during meetings and assemblies that extend over multiple days, wholly vegetarian meals be served; Furthermore, the LWF encourage all participants to choose the vegetarian alternative as a way to contribute to environmental sustainability.
- the Council ensure that the environmental policy of the LWF covers other necessary areas in order to be extensive.

The Assembly

**VOTED: to refer to the Council**

Text of the resolution as referred:

Regarding recycling and the distribution of materials it is requested that:

- recycling at the LWF secretariat as well as during meetings and assemblies be promoted and employed;
- packaging food and gifts be avoided when possible;
- material in written form only be distributed when necessary, and books and pamphlets not be handed out liberally, but rather offered to those who choose to receive them.

Regarding the venues of meetings it is requested that:

- possible ecological and sustainable alternatives to the proposed meeting and Assembly venues always be investigated;
- preferential option be given to hotels and meeting halls with an ecological awareness and profile. It also implies investigating the possibility of conducting meetings online.

That member churches only invest in ethical and environmentally-friendly funds and investments.

The Assembly further requests that:

- the LWF and its member churches investigate new banking options, specifically focusing on ethical practices (e.g. low corporate bonuses and not rewarding greed) and sustainability practices (e.g. not contributing to the financial crisis);
- the Council formulate a public statement addressing greed and social, economic and environmental sustainability, food security in the context of climate change, and agro-ecological approaches to food production, distribution and consumption.

## LWF VISIBILITY AND THE ROLE OF YOUTH

The Eleventh Assembly asks that the LWF implement regional committees for translation of all documents into the official languages. To accomplish this goal, the LWF shall identify and utilize the services of professional and volunteer translators chosen by the regions.

The Eleventh Assembly asks that the LWF consider creating permanent regional or sub-regional youth committees within each of the LWF regions. These committees should organize regular youth conferences on the regional level to help build a stronger youth constituency for the LWF, and to enhance the engagement of youth with the LWF.

Furthermore, all Assembly plenaries should report on the gender balance within the youth delegate representation.

The Assembly

**VOTED: to refer to the Council**

Text of the resolution as referred:

## RENEWING THE CURRENT FORM OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation requests the Council to organize a committee (according to the established quotas) that will investigate the possibilities to renew the current form of the LWF Assembly with the aim to increase the democratic influence of the participating delegates.

The Assembly

**VOTED: to refer to the Council**

Text of the resolution as referred:

## ECUMENICAL CONCILIAR COOPERATION

The Eleventh Assembly took note of the report of the Renewal Committee, particularly paragraph 12.

Radical changes in the global ecumenical landscape are happening very fast. Some ecumenical bodies are suffering and some have to deal with problems related to their continuation.

In the future it will be important for the LWF to strengthen its relationship to the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Therefore the Council is requested to explore the possibility that the next assemblies of the LWF take place within the expanded space of the WCC assembly, together with other confessional bodies.

In light of declining financial resources, it will become more urgent in the near future to strive for a more concise definition and distribution of the tasks and responsibilities among the different ecumenical bodies. This process will need to reflect the richness of the different identities of these bodies in order to be fruitful for the entire ecumenical community.

The Assembly

**VOTED: to refer to the Council**

Text of the resolution as referred:

## THEOLOGICAL FORMATION

With regard to the report of the Renewal Committee, particularly Exhibit II, Annex II, it is recognized that the theological formation of leaders throughout the Lutheran World Federation is necessary to all members of the communion.

The Eleventh Assembly requests that the LWF Council place theological formation as a central priority and assess this on a regular basis for the sake of the entire communion.

The Assembly

**VOTED: to refer to the Council**

Text of the resolution as referred:

## A MEETING OF ASSEMBLY YOUTH DELEGATES

In their powerful presentation the youth delegates and participants at this Assembly offered their enthusiasm and know-how to serve not only their churches, but also the LWF in general. Several times questions were raised to learn about ways to help the LWF to achieve a greater visibility in the respective home churches and local contexts.

Many of the youth delegates are still in training. They will have moved and changed their responsibilities long before the next Assembly and their experiences and achievements might be lost.

The Assembly therefore asks the LWF to plan a meeting of the youth delegates in two or three years' time. Such a meeting should prepare a report about what has been achieved in the past two–three years, namely how decisions made in Stuttgart have been implemented.

This report will provide useful feedback for the Council while collaboration will establish a network that contributes to create future leadership. This youth meeting, if carefully prepared, will also give considerable visibility to the LWF at a worldwide level during the rather long period between this and the next LWF Assembly (similar to the German Kirchentag or the "Papa-boys").

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GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD







#### KEYNOTE ADDRESS

# Give Us Today Our Daily Bread

## His Grace Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury

Jesus speaks in the gospel (Mt 7:9) of how the human parent will not give a child a stone when the child asks for bread. If we ask for bread, one thing that will persuade us that the response is satisfactory is the knowledge that our own declaration of what we need has been heard. Part of the nourishment we need is knowing that our sisters and brothers in faith see and hear our needs as they are, not as others imagine them to be. The bread that is shared among Christians is not only a material resource but the recognition of dignity. One of our great Welsh Christian poets, R. S. Thomas, published a collection of poems in 1963 called *The Bread of Truth*; and to recognize human dignity in one another is indeed to share the truth of what humanity is in the eyes of God. We feed each other by honoring the truth of the divine image in each other.

“Give us this day our daily bread” thus becomes a prayer that asks God to sustain in us the sense of our humanity in its fullness and its richness; to give us those relations with other human beings that will keep us human, aware of our mortality and our need, yet confident that we are loved. It is a prayer to be reminded of our need: let us never forget, we pray, that we *have* to be fed, and that we cannot generate for ourselves all we need to live and flourish. And at the same time, it is a prayer that we shall not be ashamed of our mortality, our physical and vulnerable being. We start from need—where else can we start? But that is a way into understanding how and why we matter, why we are valuable. The prayer poses a critical question to anyone who imagines that they can begin from a position of self-sufficiency; it affirms that to be in need

of this “bread of truth,” in need of material or spiritual nurture, is in no way a failure but, on the contrary, a place of dignity. The prayer both challenges the arrogance of those who think they are not in need and establishes that the needy are fully possessed of a treasure that needs to be uncovered and released, the humanity that draws them into mutual relation.

Part of what we are praying for in these words is the grace to receive our own humanity as a gift. We ask for openness and gratefulness to whoever and whatever awakens us to our dignity and helps us realize that, while our dignity is essentially and primarily given in our creation, it is always in need of being called into active life by relation, by the gift of others. And the implication is clear that we should, in doing this, pray to be kept awake to what we owe to the neighbor in terms of gift; their humanity depends on ours as ours does on theirs. Many commentators on the Lord’s Prayer, such as Gregory of Nyssa, underline the irrationality of praying for our daily bread while then seeking to hold on to it at the expense of others in one way or another. And in the framework I have been outlining, this can be by way of a concern for *defending* my own dignity rather than being willing to receive it in love.

Praying for our daily bread is praying to be reacquainted with our vulnerability, to learn how to approach each other, not only to approach God, with our hands open. So to pray this prayer with integrity, we need to be thinking about the various ways in which we defend ourselves. We cannot fully and freely pray for our daily bread when we are wedded inseparably to our own rightness or righteousness, any more than we can when we are wedded to our own security or prosperity. And perhaps this explains why the Lord’s Prayer at once goes on to pray for forgiveness, or rather for the gift of being forgiven as we have learned to forgive. The person who asks forgiveness is a person who

has renounced the privilege of being right or safe; she has acknowledged that she is hungry for healing, for the bread of acceptance and restoration to relationship. But equally the person who forgives has renounced the safety of being locked into the position of the offended victim; she has decided to take the risk of creating afresh a relationship known to be dangerous, known to be capable of causing hurt. Both the giver and the receiver of forgiveness have moved out of the safety zone; they have begun to ask how to receive their humanity as a gift.

Forgiveness is one of the most radical ways in which we are able to nourish one another’s humanity. When offence is given and hurt is done, the customary human response is withdrawal, the reinforcing of the walls of the private self, with all that this implies about asserting one’s own humanity as a possession rather than receiving it as a gift. The unforgiven and the unforgiving cannot see the other as someone who is part of God’s work of bestowing humanity on them. To forgive and to be forgiven is to allow yourself to be humanized by those whom you may least want to receive as signs of God’s gift; but this process is intrinsically connected with the prayer for daily bread. To deny the possibilities of forgiveness would be to say that there are those I have no need of because they have offended me or because they have refused to extend a hand to me.

To forgive is clearly the mark of a humanity touched by God—free from anxiety about identity and safety, free to reach out into what is other, as God does in Jesus Christ. But it may be that willingness to be forgiven is no less the mark of a humanity touched by God. It is a matter of being prepared to acknowledge that I cannot grow or flourish without restored relationship, even when this means admitting the ways I have tried to avoid it. When I am forgiven by the one I have injured, I both accept that I have damaged a relationship, and accept that change is



After his election, President-elect Younan introduced his wife, Suad Younan, to the Assembly and participants use wheat stalks during the Eucharistic service.

possible. And if the logic of the Lord's Prayer is correct, that acceptance arises from and is strengthened by our own freedom to bring about the change that forgiveness entails.

Forgiveness is the exchange of the bread of life and the bread of truth; it is the way in which those who have damaged each other's humanity and denied its dignity are brought back into a relation where each feeds the other and nurtures their dignity. It is a gross distortion of forgiveness that sees it as a sort of claim to power over the other—being a patron or a benefactor toward someone less secure. We should rather think of those extraordinary words in the prophecy of Hosea (11:8-9) about the mercy of God: "How can I give you up, O Ephraim? For I am God and not a mortal." To forgive is to share in the *helplessness* of God, who cannot turn from God's own nature: not to forgive would be for God a wound in the divine life itself. Not power but the powerlessness of the God whose nature is love is what is shown in the act of forgiving. The believer rooted in Christ shares that powerlessness, and the deeper the roots go the less possible it is not to forgive. And to be forgiven is another kind of powerlessness—recognizing that I cannot live without the word of mercy, that I cannot complete the task of being myself without the healing of what I have wounded. Neither the forgiver nor the forgiven acquires the power that simply cuts off the past and leaves us alone to face the future: both have discovered that their past, with all its shadows and injuries, is now what makes it imperative to be reconciled so that they may live more fully from and with each other.

This Assembly is today focusing on the gifts and needs of Asia—which means, ironically, that the imagery of bread is less apt and immediate than that of rice. That in itself reminds us that so often we try to give to the other what they do not want or need, what is not familiar or nourish-

ing. Sharing the bread of truth means also attending to the truth of the other's actual condition. And much of what we European Christians ask forgiveness for is always going to be those moments in our history when we have offered a gift in a way that cannot be received—perhaps because it is bound to alien cultural assumptions, or more seriously because it is associated with practices of oppression and exploitation. In the Body of Christ, sooner or later, we cannot avoid the moment when we make our peace by recognizing that we need each other; that we must learn to open our hands for the rice that our Asian neighbor offers.

In contrast to what the secular culture sometime seems to think, this turning to one another in recognition of mistakes and hurts is not a futile indulgence in meaningless collective guilt or an attempt to settle scores. It is rather that we come to see how our history together has often made us less and not more human, and acknowledge that the effects of that are still powerful in our lives now. So we begin to ask one another for nourishment, including the not always easy or welcome nourishment that comes from hearing the truth.

One other crucial focus today is, of course, the act of reconciliation with Christians of the Mennonite/Anabaptist tradition. It is in relation to this tradition that all the "historic" confessional churches have perhaps most to repent, given the commitment of the Mennonite communities to non-violence. For these churches to receive the penitence of our communities is a particularly grace-filled acknowledgement that they still believe in the Body of Christ, that they have need of us; and we have good reason to see how much need we have of them, as we look at a world in which centuries of Christian collusion with violence has left so much unchallenged in the practices of power. Neither family of believers will be simply capitulating to the other; no-one is saying we should forget our history



or abandon our confession. But in the global Christian community in which we are called to feed one another, to make one another human by the exchange of Christ's good news, we can still be grateful for each other's difference and pray to be fed by it.

Scholars at least since the time of St Jerome have worried over the odd Greek word that is used in the gospels for "daily bread"—*epiousios*, whose exact meaning has proved elusive. Jerome rendered it with grim literalism as "super-substantial"—not a very helpful translation, and not one that has survived in liturgical Latin, but it has prompted a good many fanciful speculations. It probably means simply "the food on which we subsist." But Jerome himself refers to an ancient Aramaic version which presented the prayer as "Give us today the bread of tomorrow." If that represents what Jesus said, then he was telling us to pray for the gifts of the coming Kingdom to be received in the present. And if so, all that has been said so far is cast in a new light. The need, the hunger, we must learn to express is a need not simply for sustenance but for God's future. What we need is the new creation, the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

This suggests a still closer connection between the prayer for daily bread and that for forgiveness. Mutual reconciliation is one of the marks of the work of the Spirit, a radically new possibility opened up through the Body of Christ: it is itself a sign of God's future at work, and so an instance of "tomorrow's bread." To put it more fully, the unveiling of our mutual need and the shared recognition of human dignity as something realized in communion are dimensions of our human experience in which God's future is visible. And where these things happen, whether or not they are named in the context of Christ and his Spirit, there is something of the sacramental reality of "tomorrow's bread"—"five minutes of heaven," to borrow the title of an English television drama (based

on real events) which explored the cost of reconciliation in the setting of Northern Ireland. If forgiveness is the most demanding instance of learning to offer one's own resources for the sake of the dignity of another, if it is in so many ways the least "natural" or most counter-cultural form of service to each other, it is surely right to see it as a gift from the future, as God's undefeated purpose for us draws us forward.

"Give us this day our daily bread" is, then, a prayer that inevitably looks beyond the present moment and the settling of immediate needs—though at the same time, it forbids being *anxious* about tomorrow. It is as if in order to live in peace and hope today, we have to ask for that foretaste or "advance payment" of God's future which Paul identifies as the Holy Spirit (II Cor 5:5, cf. Eph 1:14). It has been said that every petition in the Lord's Prayer is implicitly a prayer for the coming of the Spirit (several of the early Fathers noted the ancient variant of "Thy Kingdom come" as "May thy Holy Spirit come"), and this is no exception. Praying for the Spirit is indeed praying for the grace to receive our humanity from God at each other's hands in the reality of communion—with all the struggle that this involves in turning toward the reality of the other, not remaining content with our images of each other. Becoming bread for each other means breaking the stony idols of ourselves and the other.

But to speak in these terms of bread and forgiveness and the future presses us toward thinking more about the act in which Christians most clearly set forth these realities as the governing marks of Christian existence: the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist. We celebrate this Supper until Christ comes, invoking the Spirit of the coming age to transform the matter of this world into the sheer gift of Christ to us and so invoking the promise of a whole world renewed, perceived and received as gift. This is, supremely, tomorrow's bread.

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Rev. Klaus Rieth, a delegate from the Evangelical Lutheran church in Württemberg, and outgoing LWF President Bishop Mark Hanson and delegates enjoy the view of balloons sailing above the buildings during the "Evening of Encounter" at Schiller Square.



But it is so, of course, not as an *object* fallen from heaven, but precisely as the bread that is actively shared by Christ's friends; and it is eaten both as an anticipation of the communion of the world to come and as a memorial of the betrayal and death of Jesus. That is to say, it is also a sacrament of forgiveness; it is the risen Jesus returning to his unfaithful disciples to create afresh in them this communion of the new world. The bread that comes down from heaven is bread that is being handled, broken and distributed by a certain kind of community, the community where people recognize their need of absolution and reconciliation with each other. The community that eats this bread and drinks this cup is one where human beings are learning to accept their vulnerability and need as well as their vocation to feed one another.

So we can connect the prayer for daily bread directly to what goes before it as well as after it in the Lord's Prayer. We ask for the Kingdom to come and for God's purpose to be realized as it is in the liturgy of heaven, in the heavenly Temple, where our basic calling to love and praise is fulfilled. And in the light of that, we pray for today's and tomorrow's bread, for the signs among us of the future of justice and reconciliation, above all as this is shown in mutual forgiveness.

The Lord's Supper is bread for the world—not simply in virtue of the sacramental bread that is literally shared and consumed, but because it is the sign of a humanity set free for mutual gift and service. The church's mission in God's world is inseparably bound up with the reality of the common life around Christ's table, the life of what a great Anglican scholar called *homo eucharisticus*, the new "species" of humanity that is created and sustained by the eucharistic gathering and its food and drink. Here is proclaimed the possibility of reconciled life and the imperative of living so as to nourish the humanity of others. There is no transforming eucharistic life if it is not fleshed

out in justice and generosity, no proper veneration for the sacramental Body and Blood that is not correspondingly fleshed out in veneration for the neighbor.

If, then, we are called to feed the world—recalling Jesus' brisk instruction to his disciples to give the multitudes something to eat (Mk 6:37)—the challenge is to become a community that nourishes humanity, a humanity on the one hand open and undefended, on the other creatively engaged with making the neighbor more human. "Give us our daily bread" must also be a prayer that we may be transformed into *homo eucharisticus*, that we may become a nourishing Body. Our internal church debates might look a little different if in each case we asked how this or that issue relates to two fundamental things—our recognition that we need one another for our own nourishment and our readiness to offer all we have and are for the feeding, material and spiritual, of a hungry world.

As things are, we are liable to fall into a variety of traps. We may conduct our interchurch quarrels in a spirit that sends out a clear message of unwillingness to live with the other and be fed by them. We may consume our time and energy in what we like to think of as service to the needy, while ignoring our own need and poverty, especially our need of silence and receptivity to God. We may imagine that by faithfully performing the liturgy we embody the reality of the Kingdom, whether or not we are being transformed into a community of mutual nourishment. We may focus so closely on the rights of human persons that we lose sight of their beauty and dignity, the beauty and dignity that help to feed us. The list could go on. But the point is that the intimate connection between our mission and the prayer for our daily bread impacts at so many levels on the life of discipleship that the range of possible areas of failure is correspondingly broad.

The worst reaction to this would be simple anxiety. The best is to recognize that our liability to failure is itself a

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reminder of our basic hunger, our need for each other. The bread of truth is also the bread of honesty about ourselves, and a church that is genuinely growing up into Christ will be one that is prepared to hear its judgment on these and other matters with patience and gratitude. So when we pray for our daily bread, we pray too for awareness of our failure, and—hard as this always is—for the grace to hear the truth about it from one another, and also from the wider world. For God can also act to nourish our humanity by the challenges and questions and rebukes that the rest of the human race puts to the church.

“Give us this day our daily bread” is thus a prayer for the fullness of the church to be made manifest: in a pattern of recognizing our own need and the neighbor’s, and being able to turn

with confidence to each other so that the need may be met; in the desire for the freedom to forgive and be forgiven; in the fuller understanding of the Eucharist as the centre of our Christian identity—not purely as a ritual act but as a foundation for community, a sharing of bread embedded in a practice of shared life, flowing out into the service of the world’s hunger. It is a prayer, simply, for Christ to be our food and sustenance, so that all self-sufficient pride, all individual anxiety and defensiveness, all greedy effort to live at the expense of the neighbor are overcome; and the church declares with clarity and conviction that there is indeed bread for the world’s hunger to be found in the Body of the Lord. May that clarity and conviction—and the repentant self-awareness that goes with it—be always ours.



## A RESPONSE TO THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS

### **Ms Inga Marie Nordstrand, Church of Norway**

First of all, I wish to express my appreciation for being invited to give a response to the keynote address. I wish also thank Archbishop Rowan Williams for his very inspiring and thought-provoking reflections on our Assembly theme. I have prepared a reflection on the main theme from a Sámi perspective, and the challenge of climate change generally as it affects indigenous communities in the North.

The extreme northern part of the world—Alaska, northern Canada, Greenland, Siberia, as well as northern Scandinavia, where I live—is often referred to as the circumpolar region. Most people consider this region a vast wilderness; in fact, it has for thousands of years been the homeland for a great number of Indigenous Peoples with related cultures, one of which is the Sámi people.

In our cultures, “daily bread” is not traditionally associated with so-called cultivated

lands, because growing crops is not a genuine possibility. Survival depends more directly on the gifts of nature through fishing, hunting, and gathering, and also reindeer herding, which is practiced by over 20 peoples, ranging from the Sámi in the West to populations throughout Siberia.

Indigenous communities in the far North are already being affected by climate change, so it is becoming a growing concern for them. The circumpolar region is today the region of earth where the temperature increase is highest. Scientific climate models estimate an average temperature increase in the Arctic region over the next 100 years of at least 6–8 degrees Celsius. This is not only true with regard to, for example, Greenland and the North Pole. Even in my home county, Finnmark, in the northernmost part of Norway, it is estimated

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that temperatures will increase by 6 degrees within 100 years.

But climate change is not only about the future. Many communities in the North are already adversely affected today. The hunting culture of the Inuit, which depends on sea ice, is threatened.

Even in my home region, we already see changes taking place. Seafish are moving to different locations due to changes in the water temperature. Our elders say they can no longer rely on the traditional weather signs by which they used to predict the weather. In mid-winter we can suddenly get freezing rain, which covers the land and, more importantly, the food sources of reindeer and other animals. Our winters are getting shorter. The spring migration of the reindeer is affected by bad snow conditions and unsafe ice for the crossing of rivers and lakes. The warmer climate is causing expansion of forests into Arctic tundra. Over the last decade we have experienced an explosion of caterpillar attacks on our birch forests. This is because winters with frosts of -37 degrees Celsius, which normally kill the caterpillar eggs, are becoming rarer.

In December last year, I attended a conference which focused on Indigenous Peoples and climate change. There a Gwitch'in woman from northern Alaska showed slides and told stories about what is going on in her community. Her people live on the Alaskan tundra, in one of the greatest wetlands in North America, encompassing thousands of lakes. Due to thawing permafrost things are

changing. Waterfowl populations are declining. Entire lakes are emptying due to permafrost thawing underneath the lake. This is bad news, because the permafrost throughout the Arctic region stores enormous amounts of methane gas, a greenhouse gas many times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>.

What should we do to confront this crisis? The Gwitch'in woman said that the young people in her community, faced with the great changes in their environment, went to their elders, asking what to do. The answer of the elders was: "Be spiritual! You need to be spiritual!" So now young people have rekindled their spiritual relationship to the land, greeting the land when they are out harvesting and affirming the gifts of food from the land as fundamental spiritual gifts.

This brings to mind reflections I read in the preparatory material and heard during this Assembly: the affirmation that daily bread is not only a "commodity" or a product of human production, but rather a spiritual gift, a sacrament of the earth that affirms our fundamental connectedness with all created life, a gift of God's mercy that connects us with the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of all life.

So, faced with the emerging effects of climate change, what does it mean to pray "Give us today our daily bread"? Maybe it is an invitation to be spiritual, in a way that embraces our connectedness with all creation, and to humbly receive and affirm daily bread as a merciful gift to be shared.





## A RESPONSE TO THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS

# Ms Jeannette Ada, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon

LWF President, LWF General Secretary, Your Excellency the Archbishop of Canterbury, ladies and gentlemen, guests and delegates to the Eleventh Assembly of the LWF,

Representing the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon, I am greatly honored to have been invited to make a few comments following the brilliant presentation by our keynote speaker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, on the main theme, “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread.” We thank him for having tackled the subject in its ecumenical and global dimension. In my response, I would like to share with you some experiences from my context.

In Cameroon and in many countries in Africa, when we speak of bread, we see different elements of our traditional food, consisting of plantains, macabos (cabbages), maize, cassava or millet. Today many people consider bread

to symbolize eating and drinking. It stands for basic human needs, for elementary requirements that remain unsatisfied for certain peoples and children of God.

“Give us today our daily bread” is also the prayer of Africa’s sons and daughters to God, the Father of humanity, who is also their Father. It is also a prayer that expresses recognition of God’s sovereignty over everything. As creator of the universe and all that is therein, God gave Africa the land that procures life by bread and the rain that makes the earth fruitful so it can produce bread. Land and water are freely given and constitute the basic capital for the development of the whole of society, but what stops that happening? Why does the earth not feed its children fairly, those in Africa, in general, and Cameroon, in particular?

Let us examine some huge, indeed crucial problems that prevent us from getting our

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daily bread: poverty, climate change and gender justice.

## POVERTY

Africa is rich in resources, both natural and human, and it has great cultural diversity. Taking account of the considerable resources available in our continent, it is scandalous to see so many people still suffering from hunger there. Hundreds of thousands of logs are transported through Cameroon's ports and railways, impoverishing our country, our villages and our populations. The uncontrolled exploitation of forests for economic purposes has a disturbing impact on the environment, climate and ecosystem. The race for wealth and the self-centeredness of certain African leaders reinforce the injustice of the economic systems and continue to have deleterious effects, crushing and dehumanizing whole populations.

The prayer "Give us today our daily bread" presupposes a life of sharing in love. However, because of the poor distribution and management of our God-given resources and wealth, the children of God suffer hunger and thirst. Speeches about good governance only go to conceal bad governance, bad leaders, corruption, injustice, the lack of political will, violations of basic human rights and gender inequality. These questions are important because they concern the people of God and cannot be left in the hands of politicians alone. So we must review our doctrine of the two kingdoms if we want to understand the implications of ensuring that each and everyone has their daily bread. The churches as a whole must take their responsibilities in the face of these challenges. Consequently we really must revise and develop our understanding of mission and diakonia in the context of our setting today.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

African countries are the hardest hit by climate change. They are also unable to cope with the consequences of climate change—food insecurity and hunger, internal displacements and conflicts about daily bread. The consequences of environmental destruction, in Cameroon as everywhere else, include the disappearance of vegetation and desertification which dry and impoverish the soil, which then has extreme

difficulty in producing bread. The earth contributes to our survival and this makes us realize how ruthless we are in our relations with the environment. It also shows us how we Christians can work together to preserve our earth and make it productive. As a communion of churches, we cannot therefore ignore environmental problems nor remain silent when populations are dispossessed of their land to the benefit of big foreign companies.

## GENDER JUSTICE

We cannot dissociate the question of daily bread from that of gender justice. In some societies, this question is an obstacle to obtaining daily bread. In Cameroon, for example, there are several negative practices that crush human beings (women, men and children), trampling on their humanity and depriving them of their daily bread. Furthermore, when speaking of gender justice in Cameroon, it is important to highlight the question of human trafficking, which is a violation of justice and human rights. Women are the object of bargaining and export for profit by individuals or organizations that use them to make money. Girls from the northern region of Cameroon may be given in marriage from the age of 12. These marriages sometimes come from alliances between two families wanting to strengthen their bonds of friendship. So a male may be given, or choose, a girl still in the womb of her mother as his wife, or one who has just been born. In addition, employers also exploit working children (boys and girls) by giving their wages to the respective guardians or those who procured the children, rather than to the children themselves. A whole system is organized around trafficking in minors, who are also exported to other countries in Africa and Europe. This situation dehumanizes children, who lose their dignity from a very early age and are deprived of their daily bread.

Fortunately for us Christians, the prayer "Give us today our daily bread" raises the idea of forgiveness, which permits us to look others in the eye and, in doing so, to see love, friendship and reconciliation. It is only in this context that the children of Cameroon—and those of other parts of the world living in the same situations—can regain their rights and their humanity in order to obtain, with dignity, the daily bread freely given by God our Father to all.

Thank you for listening.



Michael Windfuhr [right], head of the Human Rights Unit of Bread for the World, listens as Sindisiwe Ndelu [left], Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, moderates the hearing on “Daily Bread, Climate Change and Food Security.”

# Public Hearings

## Call to Action on Climate Change and Food Security

Addressing climate change is a *kairos* moment in the life of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), calling for immediate action because “God’s world is suffering,” Prof. Dr Barbara Rossing, a delegate from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, told the Assembly. “God is calling us to hope and have life in the midst of this urgent issue.”

The call to action, from Rossing and from many other delegates at the LWF’s Eleventh Assembly, came during a public hearing session on climate change and food security on 23 July. A common theme throughout the presentations and testimonies focused on the need for urgent action and for this to be done in unity among LWF members.

“We will all be helped if we can see this as a communion issue,” said Rossing, who spoke of the need for visible action during the

Assembly in the form of a motion that would impress upon member churches the urgency of climate change and “step up the focus.”

Delegates heard stories from different parts of the world on the impact of climate change on the environment and how this leads to human suffering, food insecurity, disparity, division, poverty and violence.

### GLOBAL WARMING

“Global warming is proceeding as predicted,” said Dr Stefan Rahmstorf, climatologist at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, who connected via Web conference and shared stark statistics on the rapid pace of climate change.

“The first six months this year have been the hottest first half of a year ever recorded,”

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he said. “And the last 18 months have been the hottest 18 months.”

“In the last century, there have been 28 mega droughts [in Northern Kenya], four of them in just the last decade,” said Rev. John Halkano Halahke, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya. These conditions have led to significant losses of livestock and, as a result, “many environmental livelihood consequences as people are just surviving to live.”

The lack of resources in the region has led to violence and even death. “One hundred people have lost their lives as a result of fighting for resources,” said Halahke, noting that some have resorted to raiding in order to restock livestock lost to drought.

Amid the devastating consequences of climate change and food security, several delegates spoke of finding hope through the response of member churches.

## RESPONDING LOCALLY

Ms Eszter Kalit, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary, told of how congregations within the church are working together, within their local communities and through the LWF, to provide opportunity for a new future for those affected by climate change.

Following major flooding in the region, an effect of climate change, the region has experienced widespread unemployment. “Work and school is something people can only start after they have had something to eat,” said Kalit, speaking about the catalyst for a project involving the building of an oven and founding of a bakery.

In return, the result of the actions has been twofold, she said. “Food is produced, and a safe and legal livelihood is produced.”

“We have learned that much is possible,” said Michael Windfuhr, human rights director for the German Protestant agency Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World) and co-moderator of the public hearing, in summarizing the hearing. While the effects and impacts of climate change are increasingly dangerous, Windfuhr noted there was a feeling among participants that the LWF must be involved in “encouraging communities and helping them become active,” so as to understand their critical role. It is important to act in solidarity, he said.

“The nature of God is challenging us, demanding us, and now it is our task to listen and ask what is our responsibility as individuals, as member churches and as a global organization as the LWF,” added Windhur.





Members of the Betseranai Choir perform during the public hearing on HIV and AIDS. © LWF/J. Latva-Hakuni

## Churches Urged to Intensify Efforts in Global Response to HIV and AIDS

“Injustice, poverty, gender violence, stigma and discrimination continue the suffering and vulnerability of the poor and powerless, especially girls, youth and women,” said Rev. Dr Veikko Munyika, coordinator of the LWF HIV and AIDS desk. Even as the global response to HIV and AIDS is beginning to “bear some fruit,” daily bread is out of reach for many, he told delegates at the Eleventh Assembly during a public hearing on this topic, 25 July 2010.

Munyika called for more focused action by LWF member churches, and shared startling statistics about the continued rise of HIV and AIDS. For every person beginning to receive life-saving treatments, there are five new HIV infections, he said. “Our churches have some beautiful programs but it seems we need to do more, especially in the area of prevention.”

Munyika called on member churches to join in intensifying efforts toward AIDS awareness and advocacy. “We call on you, brothers and sisters, especially church leaders, to join us in intensifying efforts.”

### “KEEP THE PROMISE”

Members of the Betseranai Choir of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe used their voices to bring messages about HIV and AIDS to the Assembly. In the song “Stop AIDS, Keep the Promise,” composed by director Paul Maphosa, the choir highlighted the promises community and church leaders have made to fight AIDS, asking them to “keep the promise.” The song laments that people are still suffering and asks when deliverance from this deadly affliction would come.

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The 20-voice choir is composed of persons living with HIV. They sing about the problems and challenges of living with the illness, and remind church and community groups, the government of Zimbabwe, the media, employers and employees to honor their declarations of commitment to work toward the prevention of HIV and AIDS.

"We are here to give a face to the HIV infection," said one member of the choir. "Through our music, the choir wants to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS. In rural areas the sickness leads to injustice, poverty, stigmatization and gender-based violence. Women and girls are especially affected."

## AN HIV-FREE GENERATION

Speaking on behalf of the many millions of people affected by HIV and AIDS, several individuals—many of whom are HIV-positive—shared their personal stories with the Assembly. They told of signs of hope and demonstrated that while being HIV-positive, they were alive, productive and should be allowed to enjoy human rights like everyone else.

Sukhulile Mhere said his greatest wish was "to see the creation of an HIV-free generation." He shared with the Assembly how he and his wife were living with HIV. Diagnosed when he was single and in his early 30s, Mhere was told by many, including his own parents, that he should never consider marriage as "he was about to die." Through counseling he came to understand that he had a right to love and to be loved and "even have a family."

"I met and fell in love with someone who [is] also HIV-positive," said Mhere, now 40. His wife recently gave birth to a "bubbling baby girl," he boasted.

Mhere and his wife have to wait for their daughter to turn nine months before she can have HIV testing, but in the meantime, the experience of having a child has shown him "that being HIV-positive is not the end but only the beginning."

## LOVE AND AFFECTION

When Joseph Anthony Samy from India was diagnosed with HIV in 1990 there was little awareness about AIDS, let alone counseling services, available for him or his family. "Many people, including doctors, advised my wife to leave me and get a separation."

Twenty years later, Samy and his wife remain committed to their marriage and have two grown children. He lends his time to assisting with counseling people about HIV risks and helping those who have tested positive with employment, reuniting broken families and admitting orphaned children in homes where they receive care.

Samy called on delegates to avoid stigmatizing and discriminating against HIV-positive people. "Show your love and affection," he urged. "If possible, give care and support to them in all ways and kindly see the Christ in them as well."

Manfred Weber, who lives near Ulm, Germany, said he discovered he was infected when donating blood in 1989. Married and with three children, the 60-year-old said he initially kept it secret, even from his own family, but he now lives openly with the illness and is committed to obtaining better care for people who are HIV positive. "At that time I lost a lot but I also gained a lot." In 2011 he hopes to organize a "positive pilgrimage" with other persons affected.

Rosemarie Rincon from Colombia criticized the "macho" society in her country. "I was infected in my own home," she said. That was 12 years ago and after that she lost her husband and two children. Now, in her own words, she is experiencing "a new springtime." She is able "to live anew with God, reconciliation and forgiveness." She has a daughter aged 18 months and a husband. Each day, she accepts the challenge of living with the illness. At the same time, she is taking further training in psychology in order to be able to accompany sick persons. "HIV and AIDS are not synonymous with death," she emphasized.



Presenters at the panel on illegitimate debt © LWF/J. Latva-Hakuni

## Lutherans Ponder Illegitimate Foreign Debt as a Justice Issue

Some financial institutions consider only profits instead of also taking people's needs into account, "which causes many people to be deprived of their daily bread," Rev. Ángel F. Furlan of Argentina's United Evangelical Lutheran Church told delegates at the Eleventh Assembly. Debt plays a fundamental part in excluding people from food, education and health services in countries where accumulated debt has become an overwhelming burden, he said.

Furlan, who was among presenters during the 24 July 2010 public hearing on illegitimate debt, reported that over the years developing countries had accumulated debt to international creditors, often in times of dictatorships or when financial organizations considered only profits. For over three decades this external debt servicing had forced millions of people into poverty by reducing their access to food and opportunity.

For example, "when we ask for our daily bread in Latin America, there is always an element of external debt," said Rev Dr Gloria Rojas Vargas, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile. Hunger, social justice and lack of opportunity are all related to debt, which affects young and old, women and men, and every level of society.

### CO-RESPONSIBILITY

An example of illegitimate debt was provided by Bishop Sumoward Harris of the Lutheran Church in Liberia (LCL) and Ms Margareta Grape, Church of Sweden.

Liberia has accumulated a USD 4.6 billion debt under dictatorships since 1846, said LCL Bishop Sumoward Harris. "How can such a

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poor country possibly pay for this when the people have so little money, and many have no food, no education?”

Up until 1980, the Liberian government had bought from Sweden warships worth USD 6.44 million plus USD 1.8 million in interest. In 2008, the churches from the two countries demanded that the Swedish government accept co-responsibility for the debt, declare the Liberian debt to be illegitimate, and cancel the debt, which by that time had reached nearly USD 30 million with interest.

This initiative was partly successful. The Swedish government cancelled the debt but it did not accept co-responsibility. Instead the amount of the debt cancellation was subtracted from Sweden’s development aid budget.

Ms Cristina Mora of the Lutheran Costa Rican Church and Ms Tuula Siljanen, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, explained how churches in their respective countries documented the advancing of credit that was connected with corruption. Using so-called “export credit,” the Finnish government enabled the sale of machines to Costa Rican hospitals, but only if they were purchased from a particular Finnish company. Furthermore, the machines’ operation was complicated and they could not be used by the Costa Rican hospitals.

The churches supported changing the understanding of debt from a very narrow legal interpretation to a more comprehensive, moral and ethical one, explained Siljanen. In this process the churches are demanding more transparency from government and in the practices of business enterprises.

## A NEW FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE

Mr Peter Prove, executive director of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, called on Lutherans to provide a *communio* response to debt relief and responsible lending.

The church has a long experience with diakonia to alleviate poverty and now also must move toward “prophetic diakonia,” said

Jürgen Kaiser of Erlassjahr (a coalition of 700 churches and non-governmental organizations working on illegitimate debt) in Germany. “We need to look for a new financial architecture”—one that includes taking care of people and safeguarding creation. Ethically speaking, debts should be paid, but fraud and extortion need not be a part of debt.

“Trillions of accumulated debts have become an overwhelming burden for many countries, including northern countries,” said Kaiser. “Institutions don’t want to discuss loans to dictatorships; or those transformed into public debt, usury or corruption; or power inequities when debts are renegotiated.” They do not want to talk about rapacious lending practices or second-hand debt packaging.

These debts have left too many people behind, and the image of God in so many has been injured. “We in the church *must* talk about these things. [...] We must be actors, not spectators,” Kaiser added.

## ETHICAL ISSUE

Rev. Atle Sommerfeldt of Norwegian Church Aid said, “We need to say that this is a simple ethical issue. If the person taking the loan is a crook, a dictator, and you have a vested interest in selling to them, you are responsible. [...] We must have the courage to say that, even though, technically, it can be quite complicated.”

In a recorded message, Bishop Karl Sigurbjörnsson of The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland said, “When works and achievements, profit and productivity are put first, the Lutheran doctrine of grace becomes very important. ‘Forgive us our debts.’ We are all indebted to one another. This is the context of community.”

The issue of illegitimate debt has been pursued actively for three decades through the LWF Illegitimate Debt Program. It has resulted in a publication *Not Just Numbers: Examining the Legitimacy of Foreign Debts* (Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran University Press, 2008).





Heidrun Tobler, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, during the women's message presentation

# Message from the Women's Pre-Assembly Bossey, Switzerland, 27–31 October 2009

## ON REFORMATION AND TRANSFORMATION

God calls us to be community in the world. As the world God made changes, so our reformation continues. God calls us to a life of change, reformation, and transformation. Nurtured by God's grace, we are empowered to advocate for justice; fed by God's Word, we are empowered to share the bread of life with others.

God empowers us to make change, particularly when we are dismayed by the chaos and evil in the world around us. To share the bread of justice is our sacred call. As participants of the LWF Women's Pre-Assembly, we cry for justice in the world. We yearn for cultural transformation because we are shocked that human lives, particularly

women and children, are seen as expendable; we see ourselves, the LWF, as less than a full communion when women are barred from leadership; we grieve that people around the world have less than what they need. What can we do?

We call on the LWF to be an inclusive communion: to act with others to end human trafficking; to witness the transformative power of the gospel and fully embrace women's perspectives and gifts; to insist within our societies that all peoples have a basic right to food.

The need is immediate and we urge the LWF in Assembly to set right actions in motion—"to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Lk 4:18b–19).

The following are our joys and struggles, hopes and dreams. The ongoing growth, life, and energy in the communion on the topic of gender justice may be symbolized by a tree, with deep roots anchoring the structure. The leaves denote our budding recommendations to the Lutheran community.

### WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28).

**Vocation:** The call to lead, serve, and teach is a manifestation of the vocation that God has named for us. In considering women’s ministry, we think anew about leadership and partnership, service and diakonia.

**Image of God:** Men and women are made in God’s image. The wholeness of the church requires both men and women to be included. To denigrate women is to leave a wound on the Body of Christ.

- **Ordination.** We strongly affirm the LWF commitment to the ordination of women made first by the 1984 assembly.

Encourage member churches to set up appropriate legislation and regulations that enable women to take positions of leadership—ordained and lay—and to pursue theological education.

- **Vocational gifts.** We believe that women bring an essential perspective to all types of ministry—ordained and lay—in an increasingly fractured and fractious world.

- **Vocational leadership.** We deplore the existence of the “stained glass ceiling,” which ensures that women—who can see the heights of their vocation—cannot ascend to the higher leadership levels to which they may know themselves to be called.

Identify a process for naming female candidates to LWF President, LWF Council, and other LWF positions.

- **Modeling.** We recognize the importance of modeling and encourage churches worldwide to experience women in the pulpit, at the altar, and in decision-making bodies.

Create opportunities for member churches to see visible change in the Lutheran family, for instance through church-to-church visits.

- **Theology.** We uplift women’s contributions to theology—including feminist, womanist, *mujerista*—and advocate for their inclusion in all normative, Lutheran, theological discourse.

Create an LWF task force to organize theological discussion and look for guiding gender justice principles so that member churches can contextualize and promote gender policies.

Teach theology from women’s perspectives to students, pastors, and church leaders, through regional consultations and feminist theology courses at seminaries.

### DAY SIX 25 JULY

Delegates joined local congregations in Sunday worship; among them, LWF President-elect Younan preached at Uhlbach’s Andreaskirche, and Bishop Frank O. July of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg preached in the Stiftskirche.

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## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

“For freedom Christ has set us free, stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Gal 5:1). “And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me’” (Mt 25:40).

**The Covenanted Community:** God calls us as a community gathered around the promise of a new covenant to care for all, the orphans, widows, poor and marginalized; we are to see Christ in our neighbor.

**The Two Kingdoms:** Creation is God’s kingdom. God uses the Law to ensure peace and good government, to punish evil and promote good. God uses the Gospel through Word and Sacrament to forgive sins, comfort the weary and build up the church and her people.

- **Public rejection of human trafficking.** We join with the LWF Council in absolutely rejecting “the turning of human beings into commodities, especially for the purposes of forced or exploitative labor, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, armed conflict or ‘organ harvesting,’” (2009).

Create resources, especially theological reflection, to help churches speak about human trafficking. The resources must challenge the view that trafficking happens elsewhere, as well as contextualize the reality.

Fund a summit involving theologians, pastors, service providers, and those who have been trafficked to develop strategies, sharing best practices and experiences.

- **Wholeness for victims.** We express our deepest compassion and sorrow for all those who have been victims of trafficking and call for them to be as honored and respected as ourselves.

Facilitate the construction of partnerships and cooperation between church and society, which both play roles in bringing about cultural transformation and the elimination of trafficking, through law and gospel.

- **Commodification as sin.** We believe that the commodification of human beings is sinful. In some places women sell themselves to put food on the table for their families. The church must combat the sale of women’s and children’s bodies, particularly at this time of global financial crisis.

Combat consumerism and commodification that encourages the perception that women and children are dispensable and saleable.

Counter the negative valuation of female bodies by strengthening our understanding that female bodies belong to the body of Christ and encouraging rites and liturgies for female bodies and lives, which need to be written in local languages and local paradigms.

## FOOD JUSTICE

“[A capable wife] considers a field and buys it, with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard, She girds herself with strength and makes her arms strong, She perceives that her merchandise is profitable, She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy” (Prov 31:16–18a, 20).

A symbolic action during the Sunday 25 July worship at Stuttgart’s historic Stifskirche and congregants share greetings after the Sunday service, the liturgical service was broadcast live in Germany and Norway.



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**Faith and Works:** In faith, and through the grace of God, we receive the good news of salvation and the Kingdom of God. Knowing ourselves loved and saved by God turns us back to this world, and to service of our neighbor. We hear the call of Christ in the call of our neighbor.

**The Call to Serve:** The Christian church has, since its very beginnings, placed diakonia alongside the ministry of Word and Sacrament as fundamental to our shared life. “Waiting on tables” includes ensuring that the tables are spread with food for all.

- **Right to land and food.** We deplore the fact that many women suffer from lack of access to land, especially where laws forbid women to inherit property. We affirm their right to safe nutritious food and clean water. Everyone should be free from hunger, eating food that is available, accessible, affordable and acceptable.

Encourage churches to engage in campaigns to insist upon their governments’ actions, commitments, and attitudes to food justice, especially as they relate to women and children, to gain information and formulate targeted action.

- **Naming the disparity.** We acknowledge the chasm that separates those who suffer from famine and deprivation, and those who consume too much. When we pray, we acknowledge that food is a gift from God, and ask that it continues to sustain our daily life.

For a worldwide increase in food sovereignty, our transformation needs to contribute to gender justice. We in the LWF need to connect the churches and the world in our acts of transformation for long-term, sustainable change.

- **Food production, distribution, and consumption.** We lament that while women worldwide remain the major producers of food, they are often the last to receive what they have produced. Food justice demands just production, distribution, and consumption.

Encourage active member church participation in the fight for food justice, for instance through ecumenical campaigns such as Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance “Churches’ Week of Action on Food” with focus on gender disparities.





Youth message presentation: Lutheran youth destroy labels in their call for greater gender justice and sustainability.

# Message of the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference

## Dresden, Germany, 10–17 July 2010

We are 120 participants—including delegates, stewards and LWF staff from six continents and 45 countries, representing the youth of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches—who are attending the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference (PAYC), 10–17 July 2010 in Dresden, Germany, organized by the LWF and hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony, Germany.

We come as youth representatives from all over the world from different cultures, traditions and spiritual vocations. Though we may be citizens coming from countries with different socioeconomic and political situations, we all live in a globally connected world and are united by faith in our Savior Jesus Christ who taught us to pray “Give us Today our Daily Bread.” We understand that sharing is the core of this petition, calling us to open our eyes, repent of

our selfishness and break down the walls of ignorance that are built between us.

As full members of the Lutheran Communion in the present, we are also conscious of our responsibility in connecting this generation with the future, which is why we seek the full inclusion of youth and their concerns in the life of the whole church and society. We are committed to taking part in facing our shared challenges within and through the Lutheran Communion. We are committed to respecting each other despite different theological positions on the same issue, and not only to respect the position of the majority, but also to respect minority positions.

During our conference we discussed many issues, but among the most important and urgent from our point of view are (i) **sustainability** (especially focusing on climate change

and food security), (ii) **gender justice** and (iii) the role of youth in enhancing the **visibility of the LWF**.

### SUSTAINABILITY

As young Christians, we are acutely aware of the environmental, social and economic unsustainability of current patterns of behavior and practices in our global village. The context in which we live today fails to provide a balance between these three pillars of sustainability. The still ongoing global financial and economic crisis has shown us that there are serious concerns regarding the unconstrained accumulation of wealth of the few at the expense of the many. Greed is a challenge which lies behind the unsustainability of current practices and systems, and therefore must be confronted. Injustice between rich and poor, between developed and developing countries, has its origins in this source. We look for a future in which we all finally share our daily bread.

Because of unsustainable methods of production, not only humans are suffering from economic injustice but also God's precious creation. We have to find a new paradigm in which all three pillars of sustainability—society, economy and the environment—are fully integrated, and in which the needs of today can be met without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs. Therefore as young Christians, with a personal as well as ethical concern for the future, we are challenged to promote sustainable development in its economic, environmental and social aspects.

We address ourselves to the following different expressions of the global Lutheran communion:

- The Lutheran World Federation: Through the LWF, the different Lutheran churches all over the world are

connected, and are able to experience and learn from each others' reality. This expression of communion is a powerful tool for advocating globally. We ask the LWF to hold an experimental, virtual meeting of executives during the next four years in order to explore the feasibility of using virtual meetings, thereby saving economic and environmental resources.

- LWF member churches: Churches are responsible for raising awareness and for the education of their congregations in their own specific contexts. This includes materials with practical advice on how to change lifestyles as well as theological reinterpretations in support of more sustainable and eco-friendly patterns. Churches also have a responsibility to advocate with governments, corporations and other relevant actors for social, economic and environmental sustainability in policy and practice. We ask members of the Communion to purchase and promote fair-trade and sustainable products. We strongly recommend that member churches only invest in ethical and environmentally-friendly funds and investments. We encourage active share holding advocacy. In addition, we desire the LWF and its member churches to investigate new banking options specifically focusing on ethical practices (such as paying lower corporate bonuses and not rewarding greed) and sustainability practices (by not contributing to the financial crisis).
- LWF Eleventh Assembly: We recommend that the Assembly adopt a public statement addressing greed and social, economic and environmental sustainability, food security in the context of climate change, and agro-ecological approaches to food production, distribution and consumption.

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With regard to climate change and environmental sustainability, the proportional responsibility of nations must be taken into account, assuring that national investments in environmental protection and preservation should be according to the amount of pollution produced, recognizing also that the people of the developing nations are suffering the most from the impacts of global climate change.

## GENDER JUSTICE

“Give us today our daily bread.” To us this means seeing all human beings as equals and not tolerating the denigration of anyone’s human dignity. We call upon the Communion to challenge systems and practices that limit the choices for men and women on the basis of gender. We young Lutheran people from many different geographical and cultural contexts believe that cultures and practices within both society and church that diminish the God-given dignity of women must be transformed. This includes traditional patriarchal systems and practices that prevent the emancipation of women. We recognize that in many such cases these systems and practices are sustained not only by the men who practice them, but also by women. We ask that the LWF calls on member churches to act on regional and individual, personal level to break this chain of habits.

We believe that the body is given by God and is sacred, and no one should be able to break that sanctity. We therefore think that it is important to help both women and men know their legal rights, to empower them in daily life and to challenge especially domestic violence and the objectification of women’s, children’s and men’s bodies. We ask the LWF to continue and strengthen its work to empower young women and to expressly denounce the commercialization of the human body, particularly the bodies of women and children, in the media.

Many women and men around the world lack the opportunity to obtain an education. One example of that are women and girls who have to stay home to take care of their families. Women and girls have an equal right to education. When women and girls are denied access to education, the whole society is deprived of the potentials with which God has blessed them. We believe that women, men and young people should also be entitled to comprehensive sex education, in order to empower them for responsibility for their own bodies and sexuality.

We believe that in order to be a legitimate and credible voice for gender justice in society, the church must first and foremost achieve gender justice within its own structures and practices. This is also a matter of a faith commitment to respecting the God-given dignity of all people regardless of gender. We wish also to encourage further theological study on gender equality.

Therefore we strongly agree with the outcomes of the women’s Pre-Assembly, especially on the subjects of vocational leadership, vocational gifts and ordination. As was stated in the women’s Pre-Assembly, men and women are both made in God’s image, and the wholeness of the church requires both men and women to be included and to be enabled to fully live out their respective callings.

We affirm the LWF’s longstanding policy for a minimum participation of 40 percent women in all LWF events and structures. But we are aware of an implementation gap, and consider that this quota should not be responded to in a merely tokenistic way, but out of a genuine commitment to gender justice within the church on the part of all member churches. We ask the Council to have the issue of gender justice as a standing item on the agenda. We call on the Assembly to urge member churches to re-commit to genuine, practical and effective implementation of LWF policies and decisions regarding the full participation of women in the life of the church—and of the LWF communion—as well as in society.

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Younan delivered his first sermon as president-elect in Uhlbach’s Andreaskirche, and Rev. Rainer Kiefer asked worshippers to consider the meaning of “daily bread” for a person living with HIV or amidst war in his 25 July 2010 sermon at the Church of the Resurrection Wal-drems-Heiningen.

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## LWF VISIBILITY AND THE ROLE OF YOUTH

We recognize and appreciate the opportunities afforded by the LWF through the Pre-Assembly Youth Conferences, through the policy for 20 percent participation of youth in all LWF events and structures, and through other affirmative action and empowerment measures. We are excited by the possibilities and potential of being active participants in the global LWF communion of churches. But we are dismayed by the lack of knowledge and awareness of the LWF, its role and its work in our own churches and communities.

Among the strategic communication objectives, visibility has been identified as an important issue. Communication structures and practices for the broader and more effective sharing of information concerning the LWF and its work have been highlighted by youth as essential. In order to be active and constructive participants in the life of this communion, young Lutherans must be given the opportunities, resources and information to better understand the LWF structures and processes.

Lack of language diversity in the documents produced by the LWF is one of the major obstacles to greater visibility. We understand the budgetary constraints regarding translation. We ask that the Federation implement regional committees for translation of all documents into the official languages. Therefore the LWF shall implement official and volunteer translators chosen by the regions.

We young people offer our enthusiasm, energy and networking skills, to assist in raising the profile and visibility of the LWF. We want to be part of a better two-way communication between the LWF and the churches, the congregations and the wider society. We ask only for the opportunity and the forums to do this.

In order to ensure the legitimacy and accountability of youth representatives in the life of the LWF, more democratic and transparent processes for choosing youth delegates to LWF assemblies and conferences should be

established within the churches. We do not wish to be mere numbers in a quota, but to be valuable and valued contributors to the life and work of this church family. Member churches should provide their designated representatives with the information and perspectives necessary to enable them to truly represent their churches in LWF contexts, and afford them the opportunity to provide feedback to the church governance structures and congregations.

The LWF renewal process envisages the establishment of regional conferences within the seven geographic areas. In order to help solve current and future challenges within our globalized and fast moving world, it becomes necessary to provide an effective and efficient platform of interaction. We ask LWF to consider creating permanent regional or subregional youth committees within each of the LWF regions. These committees should organize regular youth conferences on a regional level to help build a stronger youth constituency for the LWF, and to enhance the engagement of youth with the LWF. We ask the LWF to encourage its member churches to use their former youth delegates and stewards in future preparation of their youth representatives.

## CONCLUSION

Youth represent the most important potential for change in society. Young people are generally the first ones to challenge injustice and oppression and to envisage a different future—we should not forget that Jesus was about 30 years old. Young people have the skills that church structures and institutions may lack for communication and networking for change. Let us take the leadership that we are capable of taking, not only in the future, but here and now. Let us be the gifts to this communion that we know we can be.

“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.” Psalm 24:1





## **Acceptance Speech of LWF President-Elect Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan**

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ:

On behalf of all the Lutheran churches in Asia, I would like to thank you for this honor. I would also like to thank all the women in Africa and Asia who spent the day in fasting and prayer. The love of these churches, all the member churches and from the LWF—starting with that first cup of chocolate milk—has been overwhelming.

That this election took place in Germany is especially meaningful and emotional for me, since my church grew out of the German mission to the Holy Land. It is a clear sign of our strong relations with German churches.

My election is also a clear sign of the success of mission efforts in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. It points to the success of our work for justice and our efforts for mission and prophetic diakonia. It will be a great encouragement to Arab Christians and will hearten churches serving in Muslim contexts.

I believe it is a sign of the health of our communion that the new LWF general secretary and the president are elected from two of the smallest churches in the world. We are strong in you and you are strong in us. In our communion, there is no large or small, no majority or minority, for we are all servants, sharing the resources and gifts that God has given us.

I am honored by your vote of confidence and accept the job of serving as your president, knowing that your prayers and support follow me to the enormous tasks ahead.

On behalf of the Asian churches, we thank you for your trust. I promise to be the servant of the entire communion, “for I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone” (Rom 1:16a).

May God bless you.





# Address of LWF General Secretary-Elect

## Rev. Martin Junge

Dear sisters, dear brothers in Christ,

At the LWF Council meeting, during which I was elected the LWF general secretary, I addressed the Council with a little story. Those of you that were at that Council may still recall it. Today, I want to begin my address repeating that story. I do so, because I continue believing that it describes in a very meaningful way our journey as the LWF communion. The story is about a rooster in a chicken farm.

### THE SUN RISES WITHOUT OUR DOING

Every morning when it was still dark the rooster went out to crow. He did so with amazing commitment, crowing from the

depth of his heart and making use of all available resources and art. Actually, he was convinced that it was because of his crowing that the sun rose every morning. When he had finished his daily job and went back to the farm, he would look around with a sense of paternalistic pride at the hens. “There you go, darlings, I’ve made the sun rise for you,” he even said once.

One morning the sunrise was really wonderful. The rooster got so enthusiastic that he couldn’t stop crowing. The sun had long risen, but he continued crowing, just wanting to make the whole scene even more perfect.

When he went back to the chicken farm, he noticed that he had crowed too long. His throat was aching. He was only able to produce a weak croaking noise. The rooster panicked. What will happen tomorrow, if I can’t crow

anymore? What will happen to the chicken farm and to all these chickens and hens, who depend so much on my power to make the sun rise...? He went to sleep very early, hoping that the next morning he would be in good health again.

But he was not! The pain had worsened over night, and he could not even croak, but only make a ridiculously weak squeak. Yet, he went out, like every morning, pushed by the awareness of his plight and the panic that otherwise the sun wouldn't rise and they would all perish.

He tried his best, he tried hard, yet there was nothing resembling real crowing coming out of his throat.

Great was his surprise when he suddenly realized that the sun seemed to be rising anyway! Slowly but surely it came up behind the hills, like every morning. Actually, it was again one of those wonderful mornings, but this time, it came without his doing! He turned slowly and looked back toward the chicken farm. He couldn't believe what he saw there: the chickens and hens had come out like every morning as well!

Terribly depressed he went back to the chicken farm. What could be his place there? Hadn't he lost his role and reason to be? And why should he go out the next morning, if the sun rose anyway, even without his help? Oh, and he felt so embarrassed and ashamed. He didn't even dare to look into the hens' eyes.

"Hey, don't worry," said one of the hens. "You can continue crowing," she said. "Go out tomorrow as usual. But don't crow *in order to* make the sun rise. Just crow *because* the sun rises!"

### OUR POINT OF DEPARTURE: GOD'S GRACE

I have often told this story. I tell it when I want to explain how we Lutherans understand grace. Grace is like the rising

sun. It is there, just because God wants grace to be there. As nobody can prevent the sun from rising, nobody can stop God from being gracious either. That was—in a nutshell—what Jesus revealed about God. That is in all its powerful simplicity the Good News of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I often tell this story as a way of understanding good works as an expression of faith. Good works are a *response* to God's grace. This is how we Lutherans understand the relationship between justification by grace and sanctification of our lives. Sanctification arises from hearts overflowing with joy and love because of God's wonderful gifts. It is out of the gift of freedom, which God has acquired for us, that we respond with good works.

The story has also served me many times as a discussion starter for a reflection on gender roles: the rooster—why does he have to think that he is the provider? And the hens—so silent for ages, although knowing—for ages as well—what was going on? All this untapped wisdom and potential on one side, and these cruelly heavy role models on the other! What is the origin? Is it nature? Is it the culture of the chicken farm? What shapes that culture? Are there alternatives?

### THE JOURNEY OF THE LWF: A RESPONSE TO GOD'S GIFT OF COMMUNION.

Today, I am sharing this story with you as I reflect on our common journey as the LWF communion of churches.

I understand the gift of communion like this rising sun. Communion is just there, right in our midst, by God's grace! Not because of our doing, but because of God's doing! LWF member churches have recognized this gift and have wanted to accept it as the key that shapes their understanding of being the church and of their mutual relationships. Our gathering here, the Eleventh Assembly, is not intended to

## DAY SEVEN 26 JULY

The Assembly discussed reports from its Policy and Reference Committee, adopting resolutions and public statements on issues of concern for the global Lutheran communion (Plenary XII and XIII). After a first reading of the Assembly Message, General Secretary-elect Rev. Martin Junge spoke on future tasks for the LWF, and participants continued their discussion on resolutions and the Assembly Message (Plenary XIV).



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be the gathering in *order to* make communion happen—we should not repeat the mistake of the rooster. We are gathered as an Assembly *because* of our vocation to give praiseful response to God's gift of communion!

## CELEBRATING THE GIFT OF DIVERSITY

Of course, this is a difficult enough task. Who will set the tune for our praiseful response? Who is going to lead our singing? Does it have to be in unison—like Gregorian singing in days of old, where everybody had to follow the same melody? Or are we ready for polyphony, where different sections blend their individual voices to create a richer, but more complex song?

I believe it has to be a polyphonic tune! Because we read in the Bible that, while there is one body, there are many members (1 Cor 12) and that these many members give expression to a variety of gifts. We also know that the central gift, which explains all others, is love (1 Cor 13). Based on these fundamental texts, we recognize ourselves as a communion united in faith and committed to love.

At the same time, we have to face the reality of our experiences; they vary so much! Our contexts are substantially different. Our way of being the church in these differing contexts, as well as the way we describe how Christ speaks to us through the Scriptures—all this varies and takes on differing forms, flavors and expressions. The voices in the choir, they are diverse; sometimes very diverse.

But there should not be space for worry or concern among us because of our diversity. It is deep gratitude to God that should prevail. Because, in this diversity, we can recognize God nurturing the LWF member churches in an ongoing way. Our diversity is a sign that the Triune God is indeed alive and powerful! LWF member churches are today rooted in all regions of this globe. God has allowed them

to become established there and to contextualize. Diversity is not a problem. As an expression of God's powerful action through the Holy Spirit, diversity is a precious gift.

## WHAT ABOUT OUR DISSONANCES?

Yet, it is also true that this diversity becomes both a task and a challenge. It calls us as a communion of churches to identify and to name our basic agreements and our common understanding. Thus, although we participate by singing different parts of a same doxology, our diverse singing is still recognizable as praise and witness to the same God. The shape of our doxology will be configured by the way in which we as Lutheran churches understand our Christian faith. This spiral of relating our context to Scripture through the perspective of our confessional identity is one of the important theological tasks ahead of us. Although challenging, I regard it as an extraordinary opportunity to mature our understanding of being a communion of churches and become stronger witnesses of God in a world longing for the spiritual and material gifts of bread, justice, and peace.

Within this theological conversation, we will indeed have to face this other question as well: what about the dissonances that again and again become audible?

Let me go back to musical theory. According to it, there is no harmony without dissonance. Actually, one can only build harmony on the basis of dissonance. Otherwise, no tune, no choir, no polyphony is possible.

I think that this basic insight from musical theory also applies to our life as communion, to our praising response and grateful witness to the gift of communion. Dissonances are needed, as they are needed in music, so that our tune evolves and becomes increasingly refined and remains both *relevant* and *powerful* in today's world.



Morning plenary session; participants listening to Rev. Martin Junge's address.

Dissonances, though sometimes difficult to accept, carry the promise of transformative power. They will help us to find these “new songs” which the Psalm invites us to sing to our Lord. (Ps 149).

It is with this basic conviction that the LWF can approach its task of finding and rehearsing the tunes that will give witness to the gift of communion in today’s world! While journeying into unknown land, let us develop our doxology joyfully and confidently. Let’s do so with a profoundly spiritual attitude, in coherence with the fact that the LWF is fundamentally a *spiritual journey*. I’m convinced that we will find those new songs. Not *in order* to make communion happen, but *because* communion happens just as the sun rises every day.

### REMAINING DEEPLY COMMITTED TO ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

During my time in the LWF Secretariat in Geneva, I have learned a sentence from our general secretary the Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko that fully reflects my own experience and practice as a Lutheran Christian: “to be Lutheran is to be ecumenical.” I fully subscribe to this sentence. There should be no doubt that our vocation is to continue contributing and participating ecumenically. Not as an option, but as an expression of who we are as Lutheran churches. We are part of this one Body of Christ. It is because of this that we will continue working together with the World Council of Churches, with other Christian World Communions, as well as with other organizations such as the ACT-Alliance and the Global Christian Forum. These are all relevant spaces and organizations to translate our ecumenical vocation into practice. And we will also continue our commitment to dialogue with our many ecumenical partners in bilateral conversations, promot-

ing mutual understanding and relationships of trust. As we continue discerning what it means to be churches in communion, we are committed to do so with a sense of ecumenical responsibility—never turning our backs on others. On the contrary, we will seek to strengthen our contribution to unity in reconciled diversity.

Let me move on now and leave my initial story behind. Instead, I thought it worthwhile that I share with you a few details about my own personal story.

### ON A PERSONAL NOTE: THE CONTEXT AND THE CHURCH THAT SHAPED ME

I was born and grew up in Chile. Like many people in the country of my own generation, I was profoundly shaped by the period of great political difficulties in my country. We suffered the loss of democracy and freedoms and lived 17 years under the rule of military dictatorship. During that period of time, I learned how little it takes to lose democracy, and how much it takes to regain it. And I learned to appreciate the tremendous value of participatory democracy. During that period of time, which was not easy for my family either, the Lord came into my life and I discovered the church for me. It became so important! My home church became a space of protection, of mutual consolation and support. I learned to hold on to values—justice, human dignity, non-violence, tolerance—which the political and social context was contradicting almost daily. I heard words from the pulpit that affirmed us in these values. They inspired us to have hope, but also to develop that evangelical stubbornness that leads to creative resistance. I experienced how the words from the pulpit liberated many of us in order to turn to our neighbor and serve those suffering the loss of their rights, persecution, hunger and illness. I learned to appreciate the power of



Mauritanian solar engineer Bowba Mint Brahim presented a Barefoot College Assembly exhibit. Assembly participants applaud LWF General Secretary-elect Rev. Martin Junge.

the table of the Holy Communion, which nurtured our faith, hope and love during those difficult days.

From my experience in my own church, I still want to share another important detail: I grew up in a church where there have always been women pastors. I belong to a church which will soon have more female than male pastors. I'm neither nervous nor concerned about it. I'm simply grateful to God for these developments. I actually was mentored during my internship by a female pastor, Rev. Gloria Rojas, who is sitting at this Assembly representing my church as its first female President. If you want, I learned from a woman pastor how to serve as a congregational pastor.

## THE MISSION IS HOLISTIC

From the brief explanation of my faith journey you will probably recognize that I understand the mission of the church holistically.

I believe that proclamation, diakonia and prophetic presence in society (advocacy) belong intrinsically together. They all influence each other in a process of mutual transformation. Friends, what sense would it make to engage actively in advocacy, defending the rights of people, if at the same time the main message from our pulpits hammers people with the bad news that they are dirty sinners, worth nothing but harsh punishment? We ourselves would be undermining the dignity of people that we want others to uphold! What sense would it make, if we feed people in need through diakonia, but build fences around the table of the Lord and around our congregational life, making it the exclusive event for a few? We would be deepening a divide between spiritual and material needs, which holistic mission precisely wants to overcome! And what sense would it make to proclaim the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, who became one of us in order to show

God's solidarity and compassion, if this gospel doesn't move us to solidarity and compassion with others? We would be moving counter to God's powerful tide toward humanity and creation, and thus fail to be witnesses of who the Triune God actually is.

There needs to be coherence between the three dimensions of holistic mission. And there needs to be sound balance between them as well. To get at this coherence and to find this balance, I believe, is going to be a task for the LWF in the years to come. Therein, the understanding of the evangelizing church needs to be addressed as well.

## THE LWF HAS MANY CENTERS

I move on now with my address, knowing that I'm just touching on issues that deserve a much deeper development, to share with you some of the key concepts that I would like to retain as important orientation points for my service as general secretary of the LWF.

One of these key concepts is for me the notion of the *polycentric* nature of the LWF. The LWF does not have one center, but many. The LWF is globally present. There are LWF member churches in all regions of the world, and specific identities begin to evolve in those different centers. What it is to be the church is defined in a polycentric way, giving space to different ways of being the church. Each of these churches will bring something valuable to the table. Dear brothers and sisters, as I prepare to take on my service as general secretary, I'm determined to approach the entire LWF in its polycentricity, and with the basic conviction that each of these centers is a contribution to and an enrichment of our communion. Regardless of the age, size, wealth and theological and spiritual profiles of our member churches, there is no church in this communion that doesn't have something to give; there is



no church within this communion that doesn't need to receive. Resources and capacities, experiences, instruments and knowledge—let us leave behind the old idea that all this needs to be brought from one corner of the world to the other. Let us move beyond the idea that, within this communion of churches, there will be some on the giving end and some others on the receiving end. Let us instead acknowledge that each church has resources, each church has capacities, each church has experience and knowledge that we need to *circulate* and *share*.

I see the LWF moving much more strongly in this direction in the future, thus becoming a space and a process where mutual learning and mutual transformation happens.

### OUR OPPORTUNITY: DIALOGUE ACROSS AND BETWEEN CONTEXTS

A second concept, which has become extremely important to me during these last years is the notion of *transcontextual dialogue*. My computer underlines in red the word *transcontextual*, signaling that this word does not exist. Actually it does. But the fact that the computer doesn't recognize it because it doesn't seem to be a word that is being used, explains many of the problems we face today as a global village. The human race has learned to connect people around the globe through travel and communication. The human race has learned to transfer resources with a mouse click. The human race has learned to become deeply interconnected through various forms of media.

However, the human race has not yet learned to live as neighbors. Issues of neighborhood are becoming extremely complex and sometimes even highly explosive—at all levels: in villages and cities, among tribes and ethnic groups, among nations, and in the global village. We often simply don't know how to be neighbors.

I have the perception that this difficulty also applies to some extent to us as the LWF. Let me put this into theological language. As the LWF, we have been insisting—rightly so—on the notion of the contextual church. This is indeed the direction to go and is coherent with the notion of incarnation, which is so central to Lutheran theology. Churches need to be contextual, responding to conversations, challenges, needs and questions that are identified locally. Yet, within this contextual approach, which I want to strongly affirm, there is also a risk. Because we may also withdraw into own contexts. We may use our context as a refuge and even as an excuse for communication breakdown, for self-exclusion, or for the exclusion of others. Let me use in a provocative way some more Lutheran terminology here: if we are not careful, we may end up with a fourth “solus”: next to *solus Christus*, *sola gratia* and *sola scriptura*: the *solus contextus*!

I see it as one of our most challenging tasks for the future, that, while affirming the contextuality of churches, we affirm also their universality and engage therefore in dialogue, cooperation and collaborative work across contexts. Here I see us not only maturing as a communion of churches, but also contributing to the wider question of our neighborhood in this one world in which we are living together. Here I see also an excellent entry point for our interreligious engagement, with our particular focus on diapraxis and which Asian LWF member churches have brought to our common table of the LWF as their gift.

### THE LWF'S PASSION FOR INCLUSION

The third concept that will shape the way in which I will be serving the communion as its general secretary is *inclusiveness*. During the last months I have been reading the history of the LWF. I have found out that the word

## DAY EIGHT 27 JULY

The Assembly adopted its Message to the 145 churches in 79 countries that are members of the global Lutheran communion (Plenary XV). At a closing midday press conference and in reference to the Assembly theme, outgoing LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson said, “We are praying for everything that people need to sustain life each day.” The Eleventh Assembly concluded in joyful worship in the Stiftskirche.

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inclusiveness or inclusion is rather new in the vocabulary of the LWF. The longing for an inclusive church and LWF, and the effort to translate that into practice, however, has been there from the very beginning. Bishop Hanson quoted in his address Dr Noko's speech at the ELCA convention in 2009, reminding the Assembly about the prophetic action to include in the emerging LWF churches in countries that only a few years earlier had been at war! All were included. Despite suspicion and hesitation! Despite profoundly different approaches and roles taken during the war. From a political and human perspective, Lund 1947 was an extremely risky step. From a spiritual perspective and out of theological conviction, it was an extremely coherent step. It may not have been the right time in human categories to come together as the LWF, but it was the right time in God's timing of history. It was simply the *kairos*.

Some of you present here were witnesses of the painful struggle in the life of the LWF because of the practices of racial segregation in church life in South Africa. It was a struggle that influenced various Assemblies. But the outcome is very clear: exclusion on the basis of racial issues does not have space in the life of the LWF. And it was precisely *because* of this vocation for inclusion that member churches who could not distance themselves from apartheid were not harshly *dismissed* either. Their membership was *suspended*, and later on they were again fully included in the life of the LWF.

Budapest 1984 reaffirmed our commitment toward inclusion with a resolution regarding women's participation; Curitiba 1990 reaffirmed this commitment and focused on youth participation; Winnipeg 2003 brought into the visual field of the communion the reality of indigenous people and the need to include them as well.

I have observed during this Eleventh Assembly how we are struggling still with inclusion issues, particularly

of women and youth. It is becoming clear that there is homework left for us.

We are recognizing deficiencies in the life of the LWF regarding our vocation to be inclusive. We have quotas, but, often, we have difficulties to reach them. There seem to be "disconnects" between what we decide globally in an Assembly and what happens locally. But even when we fulfill quotas we are recognizing that this is not sufficient. They may ensure presence, but not necessarily participation. In order to be faithful to our previous Assembly commitments and achieve our goals we need to allow ourselves to be transformed as churches and as a global communion by the power that women and youth bring to us. And it is indeed time for us men to get involved in making our churches and the communion more inclusive. Youth during this Assembly have shown us that they are ready for this step and want to lead us! Will their leadership have space among us?

## THE LWF IS ALL OF US!

I thought it was important to share with you some of these key concepts that will most surely shape my way of serving the LWF as its general secretary. But I need to move on now, because I know that you want to hear something about my priorities as well. Actually, many people have been asking me during these days about that.

My response has been consistent: it is not about *my* priorities! Because the LWF doesn't belong to me. The LWF belongs to you, the member churches. And it is with you, through the Council, that we will have to reach the point of identifying those priorities which give direction for the time ahead. Indeed, I have my own ideas. You may have even heard some of these ideas in what I've been saying today. I understand that I will have to bring these

Steward Sergio Eloy Rios Carrillo from the Nicaraguan Lutheran Church of Faith and Hope played the drums and the bread and the wine prepared for the closing eucharistic service.



© LWF/Luis Eduardo Ramírez

ideas to the Council, which you have elected here as the body that governs the LWF and represents all member churches. I intend to exert leadership, but I want to do so in a participatory manner.

Out of this principle, my immediate task in the months of September and October, when I will be acting as general secretary, is to establish the contacts and the working relationships with the president, and with the Council.

Bishop Younan: it will be a privilege to work together with you. All your experiences in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, your exposure to such different religious and political and social hermeneutics that encounter each other in a few square kilometers, and your ability to understand each of them and remain strong and prophetic in your determination to mediate, dialogue and work for peace with justice—all this is a witness that we have been admiring around the world. Through your election as LWF President, these experiences, abilities and witness are now called upon for the entire communion. I look forward to excellent cooperation and mutual support, as we take on our respective roles of servant leadership in the LWF.

### CAUGHT BY GOD'S TIDE TOWARD HUMANITY: DIAKONIA

Dear brothers and sisters, let me now come to some concluding remarks. I will do so by going back to the little story that I put at the beginning of my presentation. The story of the proud rooster. During my theological studies, I remember that while we were learning about the parables in the New Testament, our teacher said something very important to us students. He cautioned us against a too extensive use of parables. "They will always fall short of what they actually want to explain. There will always been misleading aspects in a parable, or even missing ones."

This is also true for the story that I used at the beginning. Because it dealt too much with the vertical perspective. There is nothing wrong in it. We receive grace from God; it comes to us as a gift, similar to the rising sun. But we know as well that grace has a horizontal dimension as well. Grace doesn't tolerate to live enshrined in individual lives. Grace will always want to find its way to the neighbor. A self-confined grace, a grace that is egoistically stocked and jealously fenced off from others, will vanish like the manna in the desert.

In our identity, we have this strong theological perspective on grace as it is revealed to us in Jesus Christ. And as Lutherans, we follow this strong theological emphasis on incarnation. I always understand us as the church caught by this incarnational tide. Jesus Christ came right into the midst of this world. He touched its joys and beauties, but also its pains and sufferings. Jesus Christ came into its midst to redeem it from its deep complexities and contradictions, from its sinfulness. And we are caught by God's movement toward the world. Because God through Jesus Christ gives such a strong witness to God's love for the entire world and the neighbor, we too understand that we are called to not only live in this world, but to love it and to love our neighbor.

That is the origin of our diaconal commitment. During the LWF Seventh Assembly in Curitiba, it was even stated that our communion was a deeply diaconal communion—because of grace, and because of God's love incarnated in Jesus Christ. The LWF captured this diaconal dimension right from the beginning and has developed a strong profile among struggling, suffering and persecuted communities. In his address before this Assembly, Bishop Younan talked about the milk that he received as a child from the LWF. I could tell you more stories. For instance, from the Arauca province in Colombia, where there are tremendous levels of violence and poverty. "Lutherans

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have given us the opportunity to get organized and to protect our lives.” This is how people in Arauca got to know Lutherans. Or I could tell you about a minister of the government of Mozambique who approached the World Service director after a meeting and said to him: “I know you guys. I was a refugee in one of your camps.” This is the memory that thousands of people have about Lutherans. We are known as people with a profound passion for our neighbor. And this is good so, and this should remain so. Because in this compassion we express how we have been reached by God’s grace, and who we have become because of it.

## A DIALOGICAL COMMUNION, A RESPONSIVE COMMUNION

Let me again come with a theological concept. Bishop Hanson referred in his address before the Assembly to Luther’s definition of sin. Using the Augustine definition in Latin “*cor incurvatus in se ipsum*” Luther spoke about the “person curved in on him or herself.”

Yes, it is true. We have to discuss some internal issues which are influencing our understanding, but also the quality of our relationships as churches in communion. As we move on in our journey as a communion of churches, we will continue strengthening our regional expressions and engage in transcontextual dialogue. But: we don’t want all of this resulting in a “communion *incurvata in se ipsa*,” that is, in a communion that is curved in on itself, busy with internal dialogues, concerned about internal relationships, self-centered and horribly indifferent to the joys and pains of the world, in which the communion is placed and which the communion is called to serve. Such a communion *incurvata in se ipsa* would indeed become a communion that has been touched by the deadly sting of sin.

There continues to be hunger outside. There are child soldiers today. There is HIV.

There is the huge challenge of climate change, with a clear indication that without a strong reaction on the part of the human race, it is going to erode the basis of survival for billions of people. And there is the painful incapacity of governments to adopt a global perspective in order to tackle the challenge. Can we be a voice that contributes to this discussion? Will we have the strength to adopt a communion perspective and contribute to tackling the challenge?

## GLOBAL CHALLENGES —WHAT DO WE BRING IN?

Some months ago I read a very wise word of a North American poet, written back in the 1950s:

Man has survived hitherto  
Because he was too ignorant to know  
How to realize his wishes.  
Now that he can realize them,  
He must either change them  
Or perish.

(W.C. Williams)

In my view, these lines capture the real challenge behind the question of climate change. Friends, it is about the wishes, our wishes. It is the wishes, and how they have been developing, that is affecting creation. Changing them is ultimately a profoundly spiritual matter. The way we live, the sort of things we strive for, what we want to be and have: all this carries a strong spiritual dimension. Don’t we have something there to contribute, joining hands with other churches, other religions and organizations to tackle the challenge?

Younan and 48 other newly-elected Council members drawn from the seven LWF regions were formally installed during the closing service.



© LWF/Ratna Leak

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There is an economic order that is absolutely unfair, unjust and a deep expression of sin, depriving millions of human beings of their rights and even their lives. Did you know that the G20 spent USD 816 billion to bail out its banks? All of a sudden the money was there, overnight, to save banks. Why has this money never been available to save people needing antiretroviral treatment or to cancel debts of clearly illegal or illegitimate origin? Are human beings of less value? Isn't this a moral question that a communion like the LWF, with its global structure, should be raising, hopefully together with other denominations, religions, and organizations?

Did you know that in the year 2006, the global South transferred altogether USD 657 billion to the North? This means that, after adding up all financial flows of all natures—commercial, loans, gifts and so on—the global North had a surplus of USD 657 billion. And that in the year 2009, the “best” year regarding development aid, only USD 123 billion were offered as development aid to countries needing support? Where is the morality in that picture? Shouldn't the LWF take an active role in this discussion as well, raising its prophetic voice on behalf of those people, who are not abstract numbers, but are an important part of its 70 million members? We would even know the names of those on whose behalf we would be speaking! What a tremendous advantage: to be so firmly rooted locally and so well positioned globally. Are we making use of it?

### **FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OF REFORMATION: FOCUSING ON 2017**

Let me conclude by mentioning what I will propose to our next Council, that we should hold our next Assembly in the year 2017, thus making our Assembly one of the events marking the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the

Lutheran Reformation. This anniversary will shape quite importantly the work of the LWF in the years to come. The LWF needs to mark this anniversary and it will do so, because of what the Reformation means for our theological self-understanding. It will do so with ecumenical openness—the Lutheran Reformation is not the exclusive property of Lutheran churches; it belongs to many other churches. It was actually never meant to be the exclusive property of Lutheran churches. Rather, it was meant to be a contribution to the entire Body of Christ, and as such we should be commemorating it.

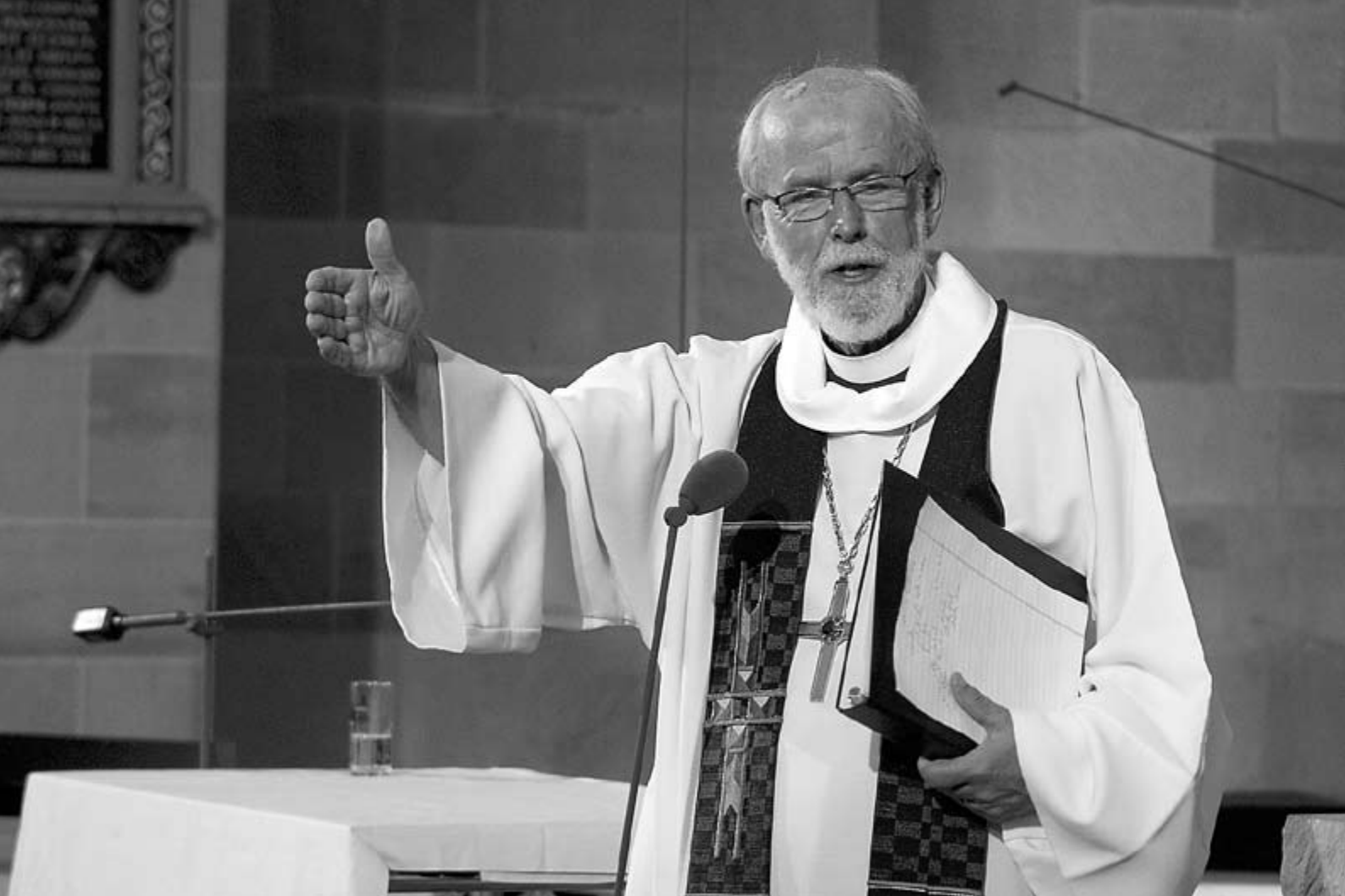
I want to express my deep appreciation for the leadership of Rev. Dr Noko, the incumbent general secretary, particularly also for the considerable time which he has been giving me in these last months in order to share information. His insights, his memory of so many details, stories and background, have all helped me to feel very well prepared to take on my leadership role for the years ahead of us.

### **LEAVING AS EMPOWERED PEOPLE**

We have come to Stuttgart inspired by a prayer—the first time ever that we gather as an Assembly under a theme that is actually a prayer. In a few days, we will be leaving this place, enriched by our common worship life, by discussions, but also new contacts and relationships. We will go to our own contexts, affirmed in our conviction that Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life, but also encouraged by his words: “you give them to eat”!

Let us go with joy and with confidence. God's grace rises every day like the sun, bringing light and warmth into our lives and into this world. Let us be a voice and a mirror of this light and join again in 2017 to continue telling the story of a God who has given us the gift of communion, a gift given to us for our loving and caring stewardship.





## SERMONS

# Opening Eucharistic Service

Ruth 1:8–9, 14b–16, 22; 2:1–3  
Luke 9:10–17

Grace to you and peace in the name of Jesus.  
Amen.

“Go back.” The words of Naomi to her daughters-in-law Orpah and Ruth seem a strange way to welcome you to this Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation.

“Go back.” Naomi’s plea was as understandable then as it is for us now. As deep as the affection was between them, Naomi believed the bonds of kinship, custom, language, nation and tradition seemed to be more promising for their security and their future.

“Go back each of you to your mother’s house. The Lord grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband.” (Ruth 1:8 *NRSV*)

Shall that become the clearest word spoken by this Assembly? Shall our response to all that unsettles the church and threatens to divide humanity and destroy God’s creation be, “Go back? Go back and find your security, your hope, and promise in what is familiar to you.” Shall that be our message?

“Send the crowd away.” Jesus’ disciples reached a conclusion similar to Naomi’s as they came to the end of a day near Bethsaida. Yes, the crowd had experienced blessing in the presence of Jesus—in his announcement of God’s Kingdom arriving, manifest in acts of compassionate healing. Yet now the disciples thought it best to separate the crowd. It was understandable—even commendable. There was an obvious lack of resources to feed such a large, hungry crowd.

“Send the crowd away.” We do understand the disciples’ request, don’t we? They were just

thinking responsibly about capacity. Given the number of hungry people and the meager resources, the most generous thing they could ask Jesus to do was disperse the crowd. "Jesus, scatter the people so they might find their own food, their own security and hope."

So will that be our plea coming out of this Assembly? Shall we assess our capacity as the LWF to respond to the migration of people, to the hunger for food and justice, for hope and salvation, and say, "Send the crowd away, Lord?" Shall our petition become "Give **me** this day **my** daily bread and help those who are hungry to find theirs?"

I find it very interesting that the disciples described being in a crowd of 5,000 people as a "deserted place." How can that be? Was it only a reference to the lack of food? Some insightful students of scriptures have observed that it is unlikely that no one in a crowd of 5,000 packed a meal. At least the religiously-minded Jews in Jesus' audience would have taken the precaution of bringing a supply of ritually clean food. But now their problem was eating that food in the company of others of uncertain moral and religious character who also had begun to follow Jesus.

One scholar wonders if it was not knowing the moral and religious status of those sitting nearby that made many reluctant to bring out whatever food they had with them.<sup>1</sup> Will that be what we want said of this Assembly? That we have gathered on behalf of 70 million Lutheran Christians all over the world, but Stuttgart became for us a "deserted place?"

Ah, but did you hear Jesus' command? Could it be that it is also spoken to us gathered for this Assembly? "Make them sit down," said Jesus. "Make them sit down in groups of about 50 each."

In other words Jesus, is saying, "Do not go into your familiar retreating. Do not flee one another for your private enclaves, for the security of familiarity. Do not retreat to separated places that are impoverished by your fears, your resentments, your preoccupation with what you do not have and your lack of faith in what God promises."

Jesus' command is to "Sit down, stay here and commune." Jesus gathered them, assembled them, and crowded them together in one community. There would be no private dining, no separating and sending to satisfy one's own hunger, no fearful fleeing one an-

other that haunts so much of our lives today. They would eat as one body. No one would be excluded on account of ritual impurity, gender, social class, HIV and AIDS, poverty or wealth, language or race.

What had earlier sounded like a command from Jesus to his disciples, "You give them something to eat," became the fulfillment of Jesus' promise as he took the bread, looked up to heaven, broke it and gave it to his disciples to distribute.

And all ate and were filled. All were satisfied. Even God was satisfied, I believe. For the people were not simply fed. This is more than an example of just and equitable distribution of resources. In this meal, Jesus brought them into communion, into the life of one body... into *communio*.

It was no one-time event. Before Jesus died, he assembled his disciples once again for a shared meal, giving them his last will and testament, a new testament in bread and cup, the promise of his life, the forgiveness that frees them to be one body.

Because God provides the *communio* we can say, as Ruth did, "Your people shall be my people." Stuttgart is not a deserted place. This is a joyful place where God is filling us and all will be satisfied.

Sisters and brothers, this is the center of this Assembly and the LWF—Jesus Christ through Word and bread and wine bringing us into communion, into the life of one body. In this Assembly Jesus, the Bread of Life sent from heaven, is present for you, making you a new creation in Christ, forgiving you, reconciling us to God and to one another, giving us the message and ministry of reconciliation.

Because "[Jesus] is our peace," we will repent and ask for forgiveness from God and from our Mennonite sisters and brothers, trusting the promise that "in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us." (Eph 2:14 *NRSV*)

May the witness of this Assembly be a joyful confidence that God answers our prayer "Give us today our daily bread," by giving abundantly, generously, and mercifully all that we and the world need. From this Assembly let us not retreat into places of familiarity and security. Rather let us go courageously and confidently in the power of the Holy Spirit to be the Body of Christ, given for the life of the world.

Mark S. Hanson, President,  
The Lutheran World Federation

<sup>1</sup> Gil Bailie, *Violence Unveiled* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1995), 214.



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# Celebratory Worship Service

(Bible texts: Luke 14:16–23 and Psalm 145, various verses)

To those present here in the Stuttgart Stiftskirche for this celebration and to those worshipping with us by way of television and radio, welcome,

**... so that my house may be filled.**

This short phrase, which we heard at the end of our reading from Luke's gospel, lingers in our ears!

**... so that my house may be filled.**

It is a passionate statement from a very generous host; a host who never tires of inviting guests to his table, even when he receives a few cancellations. He opens his door wide for all who want to come to him. No one is checking invitations at the entrance.

**... so that my house may be filled.**

The worldwide community of Lutheran Christians who have gathered here in Stuttgart, wants to share this generous invitation.

In view of global challenges such as the climate crisis and the money crisis, we might be quick to say, "We are all in the same boat." Because of globalization, we as church have become conscious of ourselves as a worldwide community with a common destiny. But we are also united by the feeling of being at the mercy of alien, apparently uncontrollable powers.

The phrase "We are in the same boat," does have a community feeling about it. But it remains imprecise and sometimes obscure. This community feeling is deceptive. The phrase can quickly be given a new twist. "We are in the same boat" can become "the boat is full."

Today's sermon text offers us another image: "We are at the same table!" Because God is the

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Host, there is always room at this table! Because we know about this generous invitation, we cannot tolerate that for some people in this world there is much room and for others no room at all.

Martin Luther taught us how we can make new beginnings through God's grace and loving kindness. From such a new beginning comes good fruit.

**... so that my house may be filled.**

The generous invitation, the great gift, applies to us all and we would like to respond. We want to make three responses here in Stuttgart:

### **JOY IN THE COMMUNITY IN FAITH**

It is simply wonderful, when Lutheran Christians from East and West, North and South gather together. There are differences in culture and language, even on a few questions of faith today. But our unity in common confession carries us. I feel a deep joy when I think about this Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation here in Stuttgart.

**... so that my house may be filled.**

### **HUNGER FOR JUSTICE**

The Assembly theme is: "Give Us Today Our Daily Bread." In many groups, food security was discussed and what we as a church body could do to fight hunger and economic exploitation. Hunger and malnutrition constitute a violation of fundamental human rights. But they also disfigure the face of Christ whose image is in each person. The LWF World Service through its projects is working so that people can live in dignity, an inalienable gift from God.

However, within the church there is hunger for justice; hunger that women and youth may take part in shaping the church too. It is about everyone having a share! People, who are living in unjust structures, whose "eyes look to you" as Psalm 145 says. We need visible changes, if we are to make visible the abundance that God gives. Each person needs a place at the table—at the dinner table, but also the negotiations table.

**... so that my house may be filled.**

### **REPENTANCE AND ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS**

For the first time in the history of LWF, a service of repentance was celebrated during the Assembly. In their representation of Reformation history, Lutherans have ignored for centuries

the suffering to which the Anabaptists had been subjected at the time of the Reformation.

Now we have acknowledged with deep regret that leading theologians from our tradition theologically supported the persecution of Anabaptists in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The re-thinking process began about 30 years ago. Our dialogue partners were the Mennonites, who share a part of the Anabaptist tradition. Many issues were addressed.

One of the things that became clear was that Johannes Brenz, who worked here in Stuttgart as a reformer, disagreed with Luther's judgment and even spoke out against the violent persecution of the Anabaptists. We are grateful for his theological witness in this matter.

We have expressed our repentance. The general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation has asked God and our Mennonite sisters and brothers for forgiveness for the injustice that was directed against their forebears. With an historical wooden tub for the washing of feet, with olive branches that the Mennonite representatives had brought to the altar from all regions of the world, they visibly demonstrated that they want to walk the path of reconciliation with us. With olive oil, we have signed the hand of one another with a cross.

**... so that my house may be filled.**

Jesus Christ, the most generous Host, invites us. He renews our fellowship. Jesus Christ prepares his table for us. This is why we must not allow the tables of this world to remain bare, why we must stand up for justice

Jesus Christ is the foundation and goal of our reconciliation. This is why we, Christians of different confessions and despite past sufferings endured, are able to journey together along new paths.

It was here in Stuttgart that the first "Vesperkirche" was founded many years ago. For several weeks people—the homeless, those who have stumbled on their way, those whom life has left on the fringes—come to a church to receive a meal and medical advice.

In front are the dinner tables, in the back, candles burn on the altar. An opportunity for prayer and confession is given. On Sundays, worship is celebrated. In that place it is easy to understand God's invitation.

**... so that my house may be filled.**

Amen.

*Bishop Frank O. July, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg*





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## Closing Eucharistic Service

Grace, peace and love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be with you. It seems that we have only just had our opening worship and now we are already seated in the closing worship of the Assembly. It is normally a time to reflect and to look for ways forward in order to deal with the challenging tasks this Assembly has identified. We have a wonderful text to reflect on this evening: a closing text crowning all the worships. It speaks of the manna which our forebears ate. What is this manna and what does it represent? To me it describes the simple relationship between God, creation and humans. God gave the manna and people were able to sustain themselves without exploiting others or depriving them of their basic food.

Today's text tells us "Jesus is the bread of life." In earlier times in Taiwan, people would greet one another with the words "Are you full?"

Every family would prepare extra rice in case unexpected guests arrived, which was often the case. "Are you full?" means "people need to be fed." Food feeds people, but it does not stop there. Through food, people feel accepted, loved and protected. Food is not just something we eat. Food is love, joy, peace and sharing. For us as Christians food is a sign of God's presence among us. When the Israelites were wandering in the desert without food, God provided manna for them. It was a miracle to the Israelites wandering in the desert. A daily miracle! They had eaten manna for many years until they arrived in Canaan and ate food from that land. God provided the manna faithfully and asked people to trust in God. God commanded that each one gather only according to their need and nothing was to be kept until the morning. This is a stern test

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of needs versus the aspiration to have more than is required. This in itself is a radical philosophy and points to the realities around the globe, of plenty and nothing. We have heard about and discussed these disparities during the Assembly. Can there be even rich Christians in the face of abject poverty and starvation? What is the gospel then? Wealth and poverty seem to coexist very peacefully with some morsels falling from the table to the needy. At times this is also called aid. Do we give from our needs or plenty!

The Israelites gathered manna every day except on the Sabbath. “So they put it aside until morning, as Moses commanded them; and it did not become foul, and there were no worms in it” (Exodus 16:24). Every day they experienced God’s faithful mercy and grace. That is what God has done also in our daily lives. God has provides us our daily bread and asks us to live in trust, not to worry about tomorrow. But we do not like to do this! We try to keep more in our hands. We gather, we store and we hoard. Then, what we hold on to so tightly often begins to fester. I do not want to discuss the global financial meltdown caused by the greed of a few. We waste food, we over-consume resources. We hold more and more while others get less and less of what they need. So there is this global saga of more and less, resulting in the gross contradictions we have learned to live with.

Dear sisters and brothers: Jesus says, “I am the bread of life.” He is our abundant God. He wants us to share the abundance we have with those who are in need. He wants us to trust him in his faithfulness. Grace therefore is to be shared and God’s grace is both universal and contextual.

Look at our world! So many people are in difficulties. They are hungry, oppressed, hopeless, excluded and unemployed. Many are homeless without even the basic necessities such as clean water, land, access to basic health, and education, and are deprived of their fundamental rights. Many are deprived of their voice—particularly women and young people. Surely everyone needs space to share their call and gifts from God. The freedom of expression is a right and a gift. We need to work for daily bread such as for justice, education, health, freedom of expression, etc.

With our faithful, abundant God we can make this world a different one. A world with more justice, more life. We shall do what God has called us to do. Jesus said: “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the

bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh” (Jn 6:51).

We have it. We have Jesus. But Jesus is not only for us. Jesus is for the life of the world. That is what he calls us Christians to do in the world, for the world. We share what we get from our faithful, graceful God. We do not hold onto all the resources in our hands. We share our gifts from God, given by his grace, with everybody. I wonder what will be the situation of this world when we meet in seven years. Would our actions from now make a little difference!

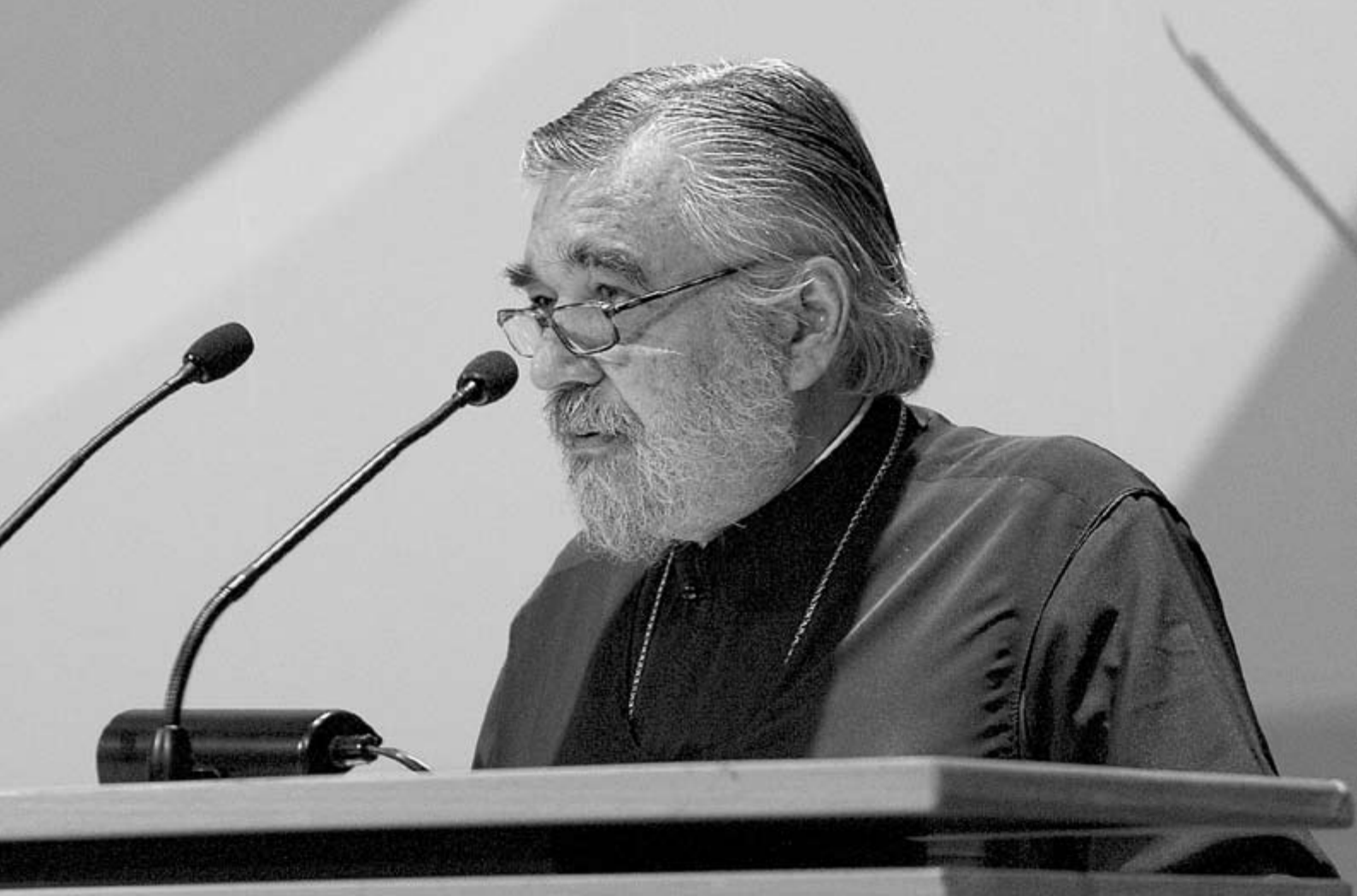
During this Assembly we elected our new president and our new council members. You have been called to serve the world through the communion. You are called to take the leadership and to share the bread of life with the world. Do not worry about what you have now. Look to our Lord Jesus Christ, the bread of life. God will give us today our daily bread. We all pray that God gives you wisdom and courage to serve on the council for the whole communion. The prophetic voices of the people and of the churches would be heard through your leadership.

And for the rest of us, we are going back home with the message from this Assembly. We go back to our contexts, our challenges and our people with this message! The table needs be set for everyone. May the bread of life, the real food, be shared with the world through all of us. This world does not only need food for the body, but also for the soul and the spirit. Jesus is the bread of life, the real food which can fulfill all the needs people have. Let us be good stewards, sharing the table with everyone around us. Let us open our eyes to see, open our ears to listen, stretch out our hands to care for the needs of the world. The book of Galatians 6:2 says, “Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” May God bless us as we carry one another’s burdens until we meet again at the Twelfth Assembly in 2017.

The Lutheran World Federation is a wonderful communion through which we can carry each other’s burdens and work with the passion in our faith of justice, peace and life. Let us continue to uphold the work of the communion offices all over the world and in Geneva. Let us go with courage to love and serve the Lord.

The Grace of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, the love of God and the passionate fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, Amen.

*Rev. Shu-Chen Chen, Lutheran Church  
of Taiwan (Republic of China)*



## ECUMENICAL AND OTHER GREETINGS

# Message from the Ecumenical Patriarch

*Read by H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima (photo)*

To the beloved participants of the Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation: Grace, mercy and peace from our Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

From the historic throne of Constantinople, we extend cordial wishes to the leadership and the participants of this major inter-ecclesial Lutheran gathering, marking the beginning of a new era in the history of your member churches and in the ecumenical movement in general. On the occasion of this auspicious encounter, we greet you with the words of St Paul: *"Rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have received reconciliation"* (Rom 5:10-12).

An assembly of the LWF is always an exceptional event for the communion and fellowship

of your member churches. It is a celebration, an experience of togetherness, an opportunity for a genuine encounter of one another and a moment for prayer to Almighty God. It is an occasion for a sober assessment of your churches' common journey on their way to the service (diakonia) of the Church of Jesus Christ. It is an encounter during which delegates from your member churches are called to search for a new vision for the future, for new ways of dialogue with other Christian churches, among them with the Orthodox Church, and for ways of being in cooperation and interaction with the entire ecumenical movement. It is also an exercise of spiritual discernment in the search to redefine and reappropriate your common commitment on the long path to Christian unity.

It was with great joy and warm interest that our church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate,

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received your kind invitation to participate in your Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany from 20 to 27 July 2010. And it was with an equal interest that we noticed that the Assembly theme for discussion and contemplation is the very important petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Give us today our daily bread."

Indeed, this most well-known important fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer is exceptionally timely today in view of the tragic situation affecting such a large part of humanity. This is particularly true for so many living in the southern hemisphere of our globe, who face the phenomenon of hunger on a daily basis. Unfortunately, technological progress, which provides all kinds of facilities, comfort and prosperity to the people of Western societies has not yet reached the people of this hemisphere who suffer from such terrible maladies such as hunger, lack of water, poverty, famine, sickness, HIV and AIDS, injustice, the violation of human rights, lack of religious freedom, interreligious conflicts and wars, the absence of peace and reconciliation between people and nations, which all unfortunately can lead to death.

Today, everywhere, the respect for human dignity has been lost in people's minds and hearts. Such an absolute lack of equality and injustice in the world is absolutely contrary to the fact that every human person has been created in "God's image" and is, on principle, an heir to His Creation. This situation is totally inhuman and unacceptable, and constitutes a spiritual and social challenge for all Christians to create prophetic responses to humanity and to the entire world. No doubt, without any delay, this lack of respect must come to an end because in the Church of Christ the principles of equality and oneness must prevail for all of

God's people. St Paul, the great Apostle of the Nations, has fervently stressed that "... our Lord Jesus Christ, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might be rich... not that other men be eased, and others burdened" (2 Cor 8:9-14).

The Orthodox Church continues its theological dialogue with the Lutheran churches through the Lutheran World Federation with responsibility and commitment. We celebrate next year the completion of thirty years since this dialogue was initiated and we acknowledge with sincerity that the path ahead of us will be long and difficult toward the hoped-for and expected unity. Orthodoxy understands that such a dialogue exists only to reach the goal of communion and that there should be no deviation from this task until the goal is reached. The unity of the Church is a gift from God and its fulfillment could be realized only with a return to the common historical and theological sources of the Undivided Church, to the period of the Apostolic teaching, of the Church Fathers and of the Synodical Ecumenical Councils of the Church, and in the participation of the sacraments and mysteries in the life of the Church.

We wholeheartedly greet and send to each one of you, dear brothers and sisters, our warmest greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ from our See of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, wishing you a successful progress in your most important work for the glory of His Holy Name and His Church.

At the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the 20<sup>th</sup> of July 2010

Yours fervent supplicant before God

*Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople,  
New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch*





## Greeting from the Roman Catholic Church

Reverend Bishop Mark Hanson, dear Ishmael Noko, dear friends,

It is with great joy and with all my heart that I express the most cordial greetings of the Catholic Church, of Pope Benedict XVI, of the Catholic delegation here present and of myself personally to this Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation. Peace and joy be with you all!

We are assembled here in Stuttgart, which is the city of the Bible and the place of important worldwide biblical associations. Here in Stuttgart, where today Catholics and Protestants are represented in more or less equal numbers and where they, together with the members of other churches, are in excellent ecumenical relations; where they live, work and pray together; here in Stuttgart which, as you heard, is one of the German cities with

the highest percentage of people of immigrant origin and a city, therefore, with a vast cultural plurality. And, not the least, we are here in Stuttgart in my own homeland and my own home diocese. You are very welcome!

Addressing you today after 11 years as president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, I reflect with great emotion and deep gratitude to God, giver of all good things, when I look back on these years of such rich and enriching cooperation with the Lutheran World Federation. These were years in which I found so many friends among you. Thank you for this. Thank you Bishop Mark Hanson; thank you Ishmael Noko—you have been good friends.

We started in 1999 in Augsburg with the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, which remains for me and for the

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Catholic Church a milestone of the ecumenical movement. It brought very good fruits. In most recent times, the report *Justification in the Life of the Church* of the Roman Catholic–Lutheran Dialogue Group for Sweden and Finland is a very valuable result, to be taken into account in further international dialogues.

Many of these shared endeavors marked our friendship over the years up to my participation in the last Assembly in Winnipeg, where we envisioned already a common commemoration of 1517 in 2017. Last year, together with my co-workers, I published a book *Harvesting the Fruits*—a harvesting of more than 40 years of common dialogue. I was more than surprised to see that it has been such a rich harvest, and we have achieved more than we could even dream before. There has been no ecumenical winter!

Lutheran–Catholic relations have, since the beginning of our international dialogue in the year 1967—some of you were perhaps not even born at that time—been in my heart, and they will remain in my heart, because I am convinced that the ecumenical movement is God’s own movement and we are only simple instruments in his hands, in order to bring us together and to reconcile us.

Our Lord himself prayed on the eve of his death that all may be one. Today, more than 40 years since the start of our international dialogues, these dialogues are still an unfinished agenda. We have every reason to continue and even to intensify and to deepen our dialogues in truth and in love. The Catholic Church is determined to continue.

The theme of your Assembly, “Give us today our daily bread,” gives strong expression to this urgency. There are millions of people in the world who are not as well off as the overwhelming majority here in Stuttgart: millions who do not have their daily bread and all that it implies; millions who do not have access to pure water, who do not have shelter, who

do not have access to work, who do not live in situations of freedom, justice and peace. There are also millions who are lacking the daily bread of spiritual orientation for their lives, who do not have the daily bread of faith and for whom hope is in short supply. These millions are our brothers and sisters. And in this situation we, as Christians, regardless of whether we are Lutherans or Catholics, share common responsibility.

In this situation, we can no longer afford our differences. Yet, we cannot and we must not jump over serious different convictions on church, church ministry and sacraments. We have to continue our dialogues in truth and love. But at the same time, we should reflect on how we could give more common witness of the faith we already share—the faith, as St Paul tells us, that expresses itself through love. We have to speak the truth in love.

Again, our theological dialogues must continue. There is no communion and there is no peace but in truth. But at the same time, we have to reflect on how to engage more in common cultural, social and environmental projects. We have to reflect on how to heal memories of the past, for example, with our Mennonite brothers and sisters. We have to pray for forgiveness and become peace-makers. And here in Western Europe, unfortunately, we have to reflect on how to defend and how to promote our common Christian roots and our common Christian heritage.

Dear friends, I leave my office, but I do not leave you, and I do not leave our common ecumenical commitment. So I am here not to say goodbye. In our German language, we say *Auf Wiedersehen*. *Au revoir*, *arrivederci*, *hasta la vista*. So, not goodbye, but farewell. All the best, and God bless you all!

*Walter Cardinal Kasper, former  
president of the Pontifical Council  
for Promoting Christian Unity*



## Greeting from the World Council of Churches

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

*"Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."* These words from St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (10:17) remind us that praying for the daily bread is also to pray for the sharing of the *one* bread. The communion you share as the Lutheran World Federation is given in the sharing of the one Christ. We need in the ecumenical movement more than ever the Lutheran, insisting that we are one because we are sharing the one and same Christ, because we receive the same gift. Whatever happens in discussions about your communion or in our wider struggles for unity, let us never forget why we ourselves are in this fellowship of the church at all. Whoever we are. Wherever we are. Whatever we are. Though we are many, we are one through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the bread of life.

Therefore, the theme chosen to guide this Assembly in prayer and action is a theme that touches the heart of the gospel and therefore also the heart of our being one in Christ. It speaks to all people who share the one prayer that Jesus Christ gave us to pray. The supplication "Give us today our daily bread" is a reminder that we are utterly dependent upon God's gifts, the undeserved grace, for our whole life, physically and spiritually. When we pray for daily bread, we acknowledge the body of Christ, the bread of life, given for our salvation, and we experience the hunger of justice that calls us into communion for actions of sharing. Thus, our call to be one is always both a gift and a calling, but as a Lutheran you know what comes first. We share because we have got a share in the one bread.

There are several reasons given for why churches are not fully sharing the one bread

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in the Eucharist. In the light of your theme and the affirmation of the one bread, there are even more important theological and moral reasons why we continue to do anything we can to be able to come to the same table and have a common sharing of the one bread.

It is indeed an honor and a privilege for me to bring to this Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation greetings on behalf of the World Council of Churches (WCC). The WCC is a fellowship of 349 Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant and United churches in over 120 countries. It provides the largest and most inclusive space in which we search daily for visible expressions of being one, in our common faith, life and witness in Christ. Many of you represent here members of the WCC fellowship. We give thanks for the Lutheran churches' contribution to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches both today and in decades past.

The Lutheran World Federation has offered many gifts. You have offered profound theological work. You have offered a deep, practical understanding of communion in Christ as a global, mutually accountable, just and caring fellowship—not focusing on size and power but on your common gift and the shared prophetic call. You are known for your commitment to peace with justice, to mission, diakonia and to ecumenical dialogue and interreligious cooperation. Let it be so also in the future. We need you. As a son of the Church of Norway and an ordained pastor in this church, it is also a personal joy for me to stand here before you knowing that I also represent you and your gifts in my ministry in the wider ecumenical context.

We are called to be one in God's mission in the world. It is as important today as it was to the churches gathered in Edinburgh one hundred years ago. The Lutheran World Federation has been a faithful partner in God's mission for unity and peace under the outgoing leadership of the general secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko. I trust that it will be so also in the next years, and I look forward to work with my friend, the general secretary-elect Rev. Dr Martin Junge. I trust that we will together steward our resources in collaboration and willingness to work together with the wider ecumenical family. Among other things I look forward to a common celebration of the gospel in 2017.

Here in Stuttgart there will be an historic moment of reconciliation between two families of churches that have been separated by the most painful of divisions—that of persecution. The Lutheran and Mennonite churches have been quietly fostering a dialogue that is rooted in the vision of transforming relations through the love of Christ, the source of our salvation and the promise of forgiveness. The World Council of Churches shares in celebrating this act of reconciliation; it is an inspiration for the whole church.

We pray that God will bless this Assembly, so that it empowers you to receive, to share and to give the bread you have received.

The ecumenical movement is a movement of the cross, based on our common belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We are participating in this movement when we do as Christ does, stretching out our arms to give, to give the bread of life to all.

*Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary*





## Message from the World Communion of Reformed Churches

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on behalf of your sisters and brothers in the one-month old baby—the World Communion of Reformed Churches. Yes, we have an old history dating back to our coming into being in 1875, but we have a young life and fresh energy dating from June 2010, when we became the World Communion of Reformed Churches. We thank you for praying along with us and accompanying us in our journey toward communion in the Reformed churches worldwide. We are thankful for the presence of the LWF delegation led by your general secretary and other representatives among us. We were encouraged and strengthened by your presence.

We thank you for setting the example of your self-understanding as communio. In the closeness of our relationship, we have learned

a few things from how this self-understanding informs your witness and actions.

We thank God for the ways in which, through our Lutheran–Reformed Joint Commission, we have affirmed our closeness and continue to see ways of deepening our relationships. The opportunities we have had to enter into conversation at grassroots levels on how best our two communions can deepen relationships at each venue of our meetings in the last meetings of the Joint Commission have made a significant impact.

As you gather under the theme “Give us today our daily bread,” we share with you the urgency, the anguish and the expectation that accompanies this prayer line. The anguish of so many hungry and homeless people, and the pain of millions who do not have access to life’s basic resources, in most cases because

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of injustice in the world, is simply difficult to understand when God has already made provision for giving us. It is by no accident that this prayer line is followed in both Matthew and Luke by the lines of seeking forgiveness and asking not to be led into temptation. I hope our reflections in this Assembly lead to repentance and seeking forgiveness for the inaction of churches. I hope we can truly search for ways of how God will deliver us from the evil of injustice into being instruments through which many more will have access to their daily bread.

I am joined in this Assembly by two dear friends and colleagues who have been key parts

of our working group, Professor Anna Case Winters and Dr Priscille Djomhoue. Together we bring the greetings of our president, Dr Jerry Pillay and the entire WCRC family. I take this opportunity to thank God for the impact of the ministry of my friend and colleague Dr Ishmael Noko which comes to an end shortly after this Assembly. And we welcome Rev. Martin Junge and look forward to our working together.

May God bless you.

*Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi, general secretary*



Photo courtesy of the General Conference  
of the Seventh-day Adventists

## Greeting from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Mr President, General Secretary, Distinguished Guests,

On behalf of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists and the nearly 30 million people who are members of the Adventist family living in 205 countries around the world, I am very pleased and honored to bring greetings from your brothers and sisters in Jesus.

Adventists have always seen themselves as part of the movement of the reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and Martin Luther has a very special place in their vision of history and in their theology.

This is the third Assembly I have attended, and I would like to congratulate you for your courage in revisiting your history about your relations with Mennonites and Anabaptists. As

Adventists, we have our roots in the Anabaptist movement, and we appreciate very much your honesty and your sincerity.

On behalf of my Church, I want to thank you very much, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, for being a great ambassador of the Lutheran family around the world and before governments and international institutions. You have been a friend of all, a mediator, and a voice of wisdom, faith, peace, and reconciliation. May God bless you and your successor, Rev. Martin Junge.

Thank you very much, and may God bless your Eleventh Assembly.

*Dr John Graz, director, Department of  
Public Affairs and Religious Liberty*







## Greeting from the Chairperson of the LWF German National Committee

President,  
General Secretary,  
Distinguished delegates and guests of the  
Assembly,  
Sisters and brothers,

It is a privilege to welcome you here to Stuttgart on behalf of the German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation. We are delighted that the Eleventh Assembly is taking place in Germany because the LWF has been of great significance for our churches since its foundation. After the Second World War we received not only material, but also spiritual support.

To this day we are grateful that through the LWF we can be part of the world-embracing communion of Lutheran churches, which enriches our theological and, especially, ecumenical work.

In order to be able to show you more of the rich variety of German Lutheranism, the German National Committee and its member churches organized the pre-Assembly visitation program. Many of you took the opportunity to visit congregations in villages and cities, diaconal organizations and monastic communities.

We have also compiled a book entitled *Lutherisch in Deutschland* (Lutheran in Germany) that we would like to present to you today so that you may become familiar with the whole spectrum of church life in Germany.

Our National Committee brings together 13 churches, numbering about 13 million Christians. We are in close church fellowship with other Protestant churches and have special ecumenical ties with the Old Catholic and Roman Catholic churches.

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This was one of the reasons why the German National Committee participated intensively in drawing up the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification and why it is now accompanying the LWF's other ecumenical dialogues with great attention.

It was also important for us to contribute to the study *Mission in Context* and the LWF's document on *Diakonia in Context*."

We press for the production and dissemination of these texts so that they can be taken up and discussed in congregations and diaconal institutions.

In welcoming the LWF Assembly in Germany at present we are also taking an important step forward in preparations for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

Together with the LWF, we have founded the LWF Center in Wittenberg. The Center holds regular seminars on the theology of Martin Luther, and invites participants from all regions of the LWF.

Furthermore, we have created a Luther Garden, in which churches from all over the world can plant a tree at the site of the 1517 Reformation. The churches are likewise asked to plant a tree in their own congregations as

a tangible symbol of the worldwide presence and ecumenical fellowship of the church.

The German National Committee has resolved to celebrate the year 2017 in a spirit of universality and ecumenism—as an event of significance extending far beyond Germany and far beyond Lutheranism. This is because the Reformation has left its mark on all churches and has caused them to change. And so in celebrating 1517, we cannot just celebrate “ourselves.” We want to celebrate the fact that God loves us and God’s church, and constantly gives us the courage to change.

So, allow me today to invite you to take advantage of the programs of the LWF Center in Wittenberg. Please help to make the Reformation anniversary in 2017 an ecumenical event celebrated in worldwide fellowship.

I would like to conclude with the words of the apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians: “May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (Galatians 1:13). Amen.

*Bishop Dr. Johannes Friedrich, Chairperson  
of the LWF German National Committee*



## Greeting from the Evangelical Church in Germany

“The preaching of the churches gains in credibility in the world when they are at one in their witness to the gospel. The gospel liberates and binds together the churches to render common service” (IV, 36). With this quotation from the Leuenberg Agreement of 16 March 1973, I greet you, sisters and brothers from all over the world. I do so in a triple capacity: on behalf of the Evangelical Church in Germany and its Council chair, church president Nikolaus Schneider, on behalf of the Union of Evangelical Churches as chair of its executive committee, and as bishop of the nearby Evangelical Church in Baden.

The quote from the Leuenberg Agreement has a direct connection with the theme of your Assembly. Our mission includes the fact that, in the fellowship of Christian churches, we ask God credibly for our daily bread and take

practical steps to ensure that all people may receive “all the necessities and nourishment for this body and life” (Small Catechism, the Creed, First Article), as part of our mission to be “at one in (...) witness to the gospel.” The Leuenberg Agreement constitutes a firm theological basis for the Evangelical Church in Germany with its Lutheran, United and Reformed member churches. We are witnessing how we have grown closer together spiritually and theologically in pulpit and altar fellowship. The Evangelical Church in Germany regards itself as a church in which the differing perspectives of Reformation theology are seen as enriching to its unity. Since 2006 the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Union of Evangelical Churches (UEK) have become even more closely linked to the EKD through agreements. Their aim is to

- achieve as much oneness between member churches as possible;
- strengthen the unity of our witness;
- enable a distinctive Protestant presence in society and the general public; and
- deepen intra-Protestant ecumenism.

In our closer cooperation we are currently discovering the spiritual power emanating from the preparations for the Reformation quincentenary in 2017. Preparing for this great event has brought out the central dimensions of the Reformation in terms of education, freedom, music, tolerance, politics, image and the Bible, and “one world.” These are key themes for the years leading up to 2017. The ecumenical dimension of this Reformation anniversary is looming ever larger. We are only part of a Reformation remembrance that links us with you, the member churches of the Lutheran World Federation, in a special way. But the ecumenical context of remembering the Reformation reaches much further, seeing that the Reformation profoundly changed the face of the church all over the world. That particularly applies to our Roman Catholic sisters and brothers. The anniversary of the Reformation is a worldwide ecumenical event that contains enormous potential for the fel-

lowship of the worldwide church of Jesus Christ and inspires us to bear common witness.

Precisely in view of the Reformation anniversary of 2017, we note that the understanding of ecumenism in “reconciled diversity” developed in the Leuenberg Agreement points beyond itself. Going beyond the European sphere, it can promote an understanding of ecumenism in which the fellowship of churches does not just grudgingly accept theological differences, but perceives them as enlivening elements of a common quest for truth. The point is to discover the wealth and beauty of the church in all its diversity as God’s work.

Can we put it more aptly than Martin Luther himself: “I believe that by my own reason or strength, I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him; but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith; just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common, true faith.” (Small Catechism, the Creed, Third Article)

Sisters and brothers, in bonds of “reconciled diversity,” I wish you many enriching experiences of unity in witnessing to the gospel at this Assembly.

*Bishop Dr Ulrich Fischer on behalf of  
the Evangelical Church in Germany*





## Greeting from the International Lutheran Council

[...] The constitutions of the International Lutheran Council (ILC) and the LWF are quite similar in [some respects;] the LWF confess[es] the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only source and norm of its doctrine, life and service, and see[s] in the three ecumenical creeds and in the confessions of the Lutheran Church, especially in the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism of Martin Luther, a pure exposition of the Word of God.

As previously indicated, the ILC does not consider itself a *communio*, as does the LWF, but as an association of churches. That distinguishing characteristic did not always exist, since the LWF began in 1947 as a free association of Lutheran churches, becoming, through a 1990 change in its constitution, a communion of churches which confess the Triune God, agree

in the proclamation of the Word of God and are united in pulpit and altar fellowship.

Since its inception, the ILC has been served by Dr Samuel Nafzger as executive secretary. He is known by many around the world for his churchmanship and focus on the basic tenets of our faith. Dr Nafzger, would you please rise to be acknowledged by this Assembly. On behalf of the ILC, I express sincere thanks to Dr Nafzger for his faithful service, and I express the same thanks to Dr Ishmael Noko, whose ministry we joyfully recognized last night. The two of them have developed a more than cordial and collegial relationship over the years, meeting together to discuss matters of importance between the two organizations they represent. I know they join me in expressing a desire for continued communication between leaders of the LWF

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and the ILC—the two most significant Lutheran alliances in the world.

In such communication, I pray that ongoing attention will be given to the deep concern of many that the sacred scriptural truths which precipitated the Reformation are in danger of being lost. In today's pluralistic, post-modern society, challenges to the truth have first been tolerated, then accepted, and now affirmed. The result is that many people no longer know or speak the truth regarding even basic values that have been an integral part of what Christians have believed, taught and confessed since, and even before, the time of the Reformation.

Even after millennia of acceptance of basic facts of life and principles of faith, we no longer, for example, have general consensus or broad concurrence, not to mention complete agreement, on what constitutes marriage in the eyes of God or what is acceptable or non-acceptable sexual behavior. This reality precipitated the drafting and unanimous acceptance of a statement last year by the International Lutheran Council titled "Same-gender relationships and the Church." Available on the ILC Web site, it speaks of the Bible's witness and Christian teaching through 2000 years regarding the practice of homosexuality as a violation of the will of God. Yet it also declares our resolve to approach those with homosexual inclinations with the deepest possible Christian love and pastoral concern in whatever situation they may be living.

Though we affirm the demands of God's law without reservation, we Christians confess that the sins of the world have been forgiven through Christ's suffering and death on the cross. I share these words with this Assembly neither to stand in judgment nor ignoring the logs in my own eye, but with a heavy heart, for I know what you know, namely, that significant

internal strife, serious spiritual conflict and even organic schism can and does result from such disagreement regarding matters of faith and life that until recently have withstood the test of thousands of years. And while I have witnessed and experienced unmistakable expressions of love and acceptance in this Assembly, I grieve the different understanding of the authority of Holy Scripture that threatens to fracture our unity in Christ.

Bishop Hanson, brother Mark, you are completing your term as president of the LWF and I am transitioning from my roles as chairman of the ILC and president of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. I express to you, my brother in Christ, my appreciation for your friendship over the past nine years. While we do not agree on numerous matters of faith and life, I have genuinely appreciated your fraternal collegiality and gentle spirit, and pray God's blessings on your future endeavors.

Finally, it is my sincere hope and fervent prayer that in the years ahead, the witness of the churches comprising the LWF and the ILC will reflect the words of the Apostle Paul: "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit. Just as you were called to the one hope to which you were called, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

Thank you, and may God richly bless each and every one of you.

*Rev. Dr Gerald B. Kieschnik, ILC chairperson*



## Greeting from the Pentecostal Churches

Dear delegates, guests and visitors, esteemed officers: greetings in the name of Jesus Christ.

It is a great honor to address you as a Pentecostal with a word of greeting. The reason I have been invited as a guest to this Assembly goes back to a series of informal dialogues that have taken place between Lutherans and Pentecostals during the past six years. Allow me to tell you the story how these conversations came about, what came of it and why we believe with all our heart that the formal dialogue between the two traditions should be initiated.

It was in the 1990s that various officers of the LWF felt that the dialogue with classical Pentecostals would be desirable, as they became aware of the increasing importance of that global movement. They were also very much interested in order to better relate to charismatic believers among their own ranks

This wish for dialogue was inaugurated at the Winnipeg Assembly in 2003. It was in 2004 that the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg took the initiative and convened a meeting with four Pentecostals and four Lutherans to discuss the possibilities of future meetings.

It became clear that if this dialogue were to be effective, it should develop its own agenda and methodology, taking into account the ecclesial, theological and cultural diversity within Pentecostalism.

As the participants got acquainted and shared their histories and ecumenical visions, they realized that instead of focusing on a set of particular doctrines, they would rather begin to talk about experiential issues. The overarching theme that was chosen was How do we encounter Christ?

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It also seemed important that we would visit each other's worship services and reflect on these visits.

At the same time, burning issues, for instance, the problem of proselytism or sheep stealing, were put on the table.

As the conversations progressed, bonds of trust were established and things came together in a very encouraging way.

During the past years both teams were positively surprised. They were pushed forward beyond original assumptions and expectations. This ecumenical enterprise and the methodology it used found a fruitful expression.

Due to this encouraging development, the Ecumenical Institute of Strasbourg has pushed forward with the publication of a booklet giving an account of the progress achieved and making the case why it is desirable that formal dialogue between Lutherans and Pentecostals be established by the Lutheran World Federation. It must be added at this point that for us Pentecostals, too, there is the wish to engage in further discussions with Lutherans as we recognize ourselves as children of the Reformation.

The report entitled *Lutherans and Pentecostals in Dialogue* sets out with a list of goals that such a dialogue should keep in mind: to think and speak appropriately about the other, not bearing false witness against each other; to be mutually enriched by each other's tradition; to provide opportunities for mutual correction; to enable cooperation in ministry, mission and social outreach; to resolve and avoid conflicts between our churches.

Then, the booklet contains an analysis of insights gleaned. And finally there is a larger section in this booklet with chapters introducing Lutheranism to Pentecostals and vice versa. There is also a case study on Lutheran reactions to Pentecostalism.

Indeed, this is a very valuable book; make sure you get a copy. And you may have noticed the small print, but you know, what is written in small print is important.

If you are interested, go to the booth of the Ecumenical Institute in the foyer and after lunch at 1:30 you will be able to talk to people who have been part of these conversations.

Now, let me close my greeting on a biblical note. We read in the fourth chapter of the first epistle of Peter the following instruction: "Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received."

This is the beauty of the worldwide body of Christ—that we have been given different gifts. There is diversity, but one God. It is by grace, by the grace of our Lord, that we can be good stewards precisely where we have been placed. We can learn from one another and we can encourage one another.

There may be difficulties and challenges ahead. Certainly, mistakes have been made and there is poverty and injustice, but God is not finished with us yet. It is through, in and with Jesus Christ that we can minister to this world in the power of the Holy Spirit. This power wants to transform us; this power reunites families and brings people together in the bond of love. We've seen it happen all across the globe. And one day the power of God will bring us together and make us one in Christ.

Yes, let us be good stewards and serve each other with the particular gifts that we have received. Let us do this to honor God and to be a blessing to humankind and to the whole of creation.

Thank you

*Dr Jean-Daniel Plüss, co-chairperson of  
the Lutheran–Pentecostal Study Group*





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## Greeting from the Organization of African Instituted Churches

Thank you so much for the kind welcome and thank you, Mr President. I greet you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I bring greetings from the Organization of African Instituted Churches. The leadership sends fraternal greetings.

The theme of this Assembly is relevant not only to the work of The Lutheran World Federation as a communion of churches, but to all Christian communions, that is “Give us today our daily bread.” We also congratulate you for the humility you have exhibited in the process of dealing with a difficult past. Your courage to repent publicly to the Mennonites has not only started a process of healing between the Lutherans and the Mennonites, but in the whole body of Christ, because we are one in Christ.

Give us today our daily bread is about transforming the values that are holding the global political, economic and social order in captivity.

It is our prayer that we shall continue to work together to engage and transform this order which is to a great extent selfish and uncaring.

The Lord told us to pray for *our* daily bread, not *my* daily bread and that is what is important about the theme of this Assembly. We should remind ourselves that “give us today daily bread” is beyond charity, compassion, and relief efforts; all these are acceptable to God, but they do not replace what the scriptures demand of us and of every system in place and that is justice for all.

The prophet Amos reminds us “Let justice flow like a river, righteousness like a never failing stream.”

Thank you for inviting us to be part of this and may the Lord bless you as you work for a better future.

*Rev. Nicta M. Lubaale, general secretary*





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## Greeting from Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia

*Read by Rev. Rudolf Renfer (photo), Director, LWF Office for Personnel*

To the president, the general secretary and the delegates to the Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, Stuttgart, Germany

As you are praying, celebrating and deliberating in Stuttgart, many Christians everywhere in the world beseech God through the same prayer, “Give us today our daily bread” (Mt 6:11).

Our Lord tells us that the supplication to receive this gift, the bread, should not be for our selfish needs, but for the sake of reaching others, sharing with our neighbors. Let us reflect about the imperative of sharing our resources, our bread, with others.

The spiritual act of supplication calls us today to look at the bread both as a spiritual food and a material end. Let us ask ourselves

in humility: where are we as churches in our common responsibility to share the bread of the Eucharist? How far are we safeguarding the sustainability and integrity of God’s creation as the level of consumption of food is increasing at an alarming pace? What should we do in view of increasing food scarcity and its impact on the daily life of millions of people? Indeed, the preparatory materials of your Assembly touch these basic concerns.

Beyond reflecting on these issues, passing nice resolutions, we must act. We are the stewards of the Creation; this is a God-given vocation. Hence, we must act together as churches on the basis of the gospel values and in obedient response to the call of God in Jesus Christ. We must also act together with other religions on the basis of common values, accepting and respecting our differences.

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We therefore pray that the Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation opens new ways to strengthen the God-given unity in the Lord's Chalice and safeguard God's creation.

In our common Lord Jesus Christ,  
*Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia*





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## Greeting from the World Young Women's Christian Association

President Bishop Hanson, delegates and guests,

On behalf of the President of the World Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Susan Brennan, myself, the World YWCA board and movement, I bring greetings to this Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation. I am joined by Ana Villanueva, my colleague, who has been with the Assembly since the beginning and is a committed co-worker within the Lutheran community.

Reaching 25 million women and girls through 22,000 communities in 125 countries, the World YWCA is a global membership movement of women, based on the Christian faith, whose vision is that of a fully inclusive world where justice, peace, health, human dignity, freedom and care for the environment

are promoted and sustained through women's leadership.

Founded in 1894, historically, the World YWCA has been a midwife of the ecumenical movement, and many Lutheran women are members of YWCAs all over the world.

The World YWCA and the LWF, we both live in the same neighborhood not only in Geneva, but everywhere. We have very close and strong links through staff who are working and have worked in both organizations, such as my predecessor Dr Musimbi Kanyoro. We share work for peace with justice as members of different ecumenical and NGO groups. We rejoice and are thankful for having the privilege of participating in this Assembly as ecumenical guests.

We take this opportunity to recognize the leadership of Dr Ishmael Noko during his many

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years serving the LWF. We wish Dr Noko all God's blessings in his future. We welcome and pray for God's wisdom and richest blessings upon his successor, Rev. Martin Junge, upon president-elect Bishop Munib Younan and the newly elected leadership of the LWF.

As you gathered to celebrate, deliberate, pray and explore together ways of being "God's instrument for leading justice and reconciliation in the midst of brokenness in church and society," the World YWCA urges you, brothers and sisters, to always keep in mind that as women and men, created in God's image, **both together** are called to be God's instruments of peace and justice for all creation.

We congratulate you all for the Eleventh Assembly's profound resolutions on gender justice, human trafficking and the rights of the Dalit people. These all have a profound impact on the lives of women and their families worldwide.

As the soil is not fertile without water, and as life needs light to exist, so God's creation, our world, our churches and societies need the active and committed participation and leadership of both men and women to produce fruits of blessing. Equal access to

education, leadership and decision-making for girls and boys, women and men, will ensure more inclusive and just societies, according to God's will.

Women and girls are often the most vulnerable in the face of conflict, war, catastrophes, economic instability and degradation of the environment. As you pray every day "Give us today our daily bread," may God guide you and inspire you to be fully aware every day of the suffering of many because of the exclusion and abuse by those who hold the power.

Sexism is a sin and it has to be openly declared. May your voice be prophetic and expose clearly the injustices that still need to be overcome in church and society, trusting that God's love empowers us to deal with even the most difficult and uncomfortable issues.

May the God of Life, of Mercy and Love bless your deliberations so that the outcomes of this Assembly will be signs of renewed hope, not only for the Lutheran communion, but for the whole of God's creation.

Thank you.

*Ms Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda,  
general secretary*



Stewards display empty ballot boxes before collecting votes for the election of a new LWF president.

# Expression of Gratitude

*Text of the Expression Gratitude as adopted by the Assembly*

This Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, convened in Stuttgart, expresses its gratitude to the following persons and organizations for their part in making this Assembly a meaningful and important event in the life of the LWF and the lives of those who participated in the Assembly.

To the Lord Mayor of the City of Stuttgart, Mr Wolfgang Schuster, who brought greetings to the Assembly, and to the officials and their co-workers who welcomed the Assembly participants and extended the hospitality of the city.

To His Excellency Mr Wolfgang Schäuble, the minister of finance of the Federal Republic

of Germany, for his address and greetings he brought from Her Excellency Dr Angela Merkel, German chancellor, to the Assembly.

To the management and staff of the Liederhalle, in particular project manager Mr Sascha Schmidt, and the Evangelische Medienhaus for video streaming, and for providing meeting and technical facilities. In addition, we note the comfortable accommodations provided to the participants at the Maritim, Royal, Wartburg, Ketterer, Hansa and Kronen hotels as well as the Diakonissenhaus. We also thank all of the companies and organizations that have provided extraordinary technical and other additional services.

To our generous hosts, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg, its bishop,

Rev. Frank Otfried July, and the congregations of the ELCW for their warm hospitality and hard work.

To the churches of Germany which prepared the local diaconal visits. We wish to thank Rev. Hans-Wilhelm Kasch and all of the local churches for their hospitality and leadership.

To the churches in Württemberg who welcomed the participants to attend worship services in their congregations and to share a meal with them.

To the coordinator of the Local Assembly Planning Committee, Kirchenrat Klaus Rieth, the assembly logistics coordinator, Mr Christoph Glogger, as well as the hard-working and efficient staff of the local Assembly Planning Office and more than 200 dedicated volunteers.

To the Stiftskirche of Stuttgart for welcoming the Assembly to hold its opening and closing worship services there, those who planned and carried out the morning eucharists and midday prayers, all in a moving spirit of collaboration.

To those who held exhibitions and displays for our benefit and enrichment.

To the member churches, national committees, and in particular the German National Committee, related agencies and mission societies for contributing to the Assembly budget, and to Kärcher, Evangelische Kreditgenossenschaft eG, the City of Stuttgart, the State of Baden-Württemberg, Deutsche Bank, Wüstenrot Holding AG and Biblische Reisen.

To the member churches in Germany and their LWF National Committee, led by Bishop Johannes Friedrich, which prepared the visitation programs prior to the Assembly.

To the Assembly Planning Committee and its chairperson, Ms Angeline Swart, for their capable leadership in guiding Assembly preparations.

To Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the LWF, particular appreciation is expressed for his wise and effective leadership of the Assembly preparation process and his excellent collaboration with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg in this process. We also thank the deputy general secretary, Rev. Chandran Paul Martin, the Assembly content coordinator, Rev. Dr Erwin Buck, for the able guidance and direction they provided, and the staff of the Assembly office.

To the Assembly coordinator for worship, Rev. Per Harling; communication, Rev. Karin Achtelstetter; finance, Mr Pauli Rantanen; the pre-Assembly consultations and Mr Jaap Schep, as well as the minute-takers, other staff, co-opted staff and many others from the member churches who have unselfishly given of their time and efforts to the Assembly. Many persons have worked long and hard, but always cheerfully, to assist in making the Assembly function efficiently. A special word of thanks goes to the general-secretaries-in-the-making (stewards) for their great service. Particular gratitude is expressed to the language service, the interpreters, the translators, the editor and staff of the daily Assembly Update and the technical service for their continuous efforts to enable communication among the Assembly participants, the editors and staff of the Assembly Web site and *Lutheran World Information* for informing the world, and the audio and video news teams.

To Rev. Roger Schmidt and the LWF Youth Desk team for a professional and patient preparation of the youth delegates and stewards for the Assembly.



Participants celebrated the end of the LWF Eleventh Assembly in a closing Eucharistic service in Stuttgart's Stiftskirche. LWF Department for World Service director, Rev. Eberhard Hitzler (left), and three young participants at the altar during the closing service of the 20-27 July 2010 Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany.



The Assembly wishes to thank the local worship implementation group, Bishop Frank July and Oberkirchenrat Dr Ulrich Heckel; the music director, Mr Michael Čulo; and liturgical leaders and assistants who planned and carried out the spirit-filled worship services.

The gathering of people from all over the world in the opening service in the dramatic setting of the beautiful and historical Stiftskirche of Stuttgart, made a lasting impression of our unity. We also thank the preachers, Rev. Mark S. Hanson at the opening service and Rev. Shu-Chen Chen at the closing service.

The Assembly expressed its deep gratitude to His Grace the Most Rev. Dr Rowan Williams, archbishop of Canterbury, the keynote speaker and respondents, Ms Jeanette Ada and Ms Inga Marie Nordstrand, those who made contributions through the public hearings on daily bread, climate change and food security, as well as on illegitimate debt and on HIV and AIDS.

This Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, convened in Stuttgart, expresses its profound gratitude to presiding bishop Mark S. Hanson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for his exceptional leadership and pastoral skill in guiding our deliberations. His role as pastor of this Assembly was a fitting culmination of his servant leadership of the LWF communion since the Tenth Assembly.

This Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, convened in Stuttgart, expresses its gratitude for the work of the LWF Executive Committee, the Council, and its various committees since the Tenth Assembly. The Assembly at Winnipeg took many actions that required the attention and action of the Council. The Council has faithfully carried

out those resolutions and statements. The members of the Council and its Committees have diligently executed their tasks, including providing helpful resources and assistance to the member churches. Our profound appreciation is extended to all these persons who have served during the past seven years.

This Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, convened in Stuttgart, expresses its appreciation for the many greetings extended to the Assembly by representatives of other religious communities. We note those provided by His Eminence Walter Cardinal Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima (Limouris) of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi, general secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, Dr John Graz, director for public affairs and religious liberty of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Rev. Dr Gerald Kieschnick, chairman of the International Lutheran Council, Rev. Dr Larry Miller, general secretary of the Mennonite World Conference, Ms Nyaradzayi Gumbonzwanda, general secretary of the World Young Women's Christian Association, Dr Jean-Daniel Plüss, co-chairperson of the Lutheran-Pentecostal Study Group, Bishop Dr Gebhard Fürst, Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart, Rev. Nicta Lubaale, general secretary of the Organization of African Instituted Churches and Catholicos Aram I of the Armenian Apostolic Catholicosate of Cilicia.

This Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, convened in Stuttgart, expresses its thanks to the large number of representatives of the press, radio and television who have extensively covered and reported on the activities of this



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Assembly. These representatives have assisted in communicating to the world the role of the Lutheran World Federation in the affairs of churches and nations.

This Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, convened in Stuttgart, recognizes that there are many other persons and organizations who have been involved in the preparation, planning and functioning of this Assembly. Although unnamed, their contributions are

not unnoticed, and our hearty thanks are extended to them.

This Assembly rejoices in having former President Bishop *emeritus* Dr Christian Krause and former general secretary Bishop Gunnar Stålsett among us.

Beyond this expression, we thank God for the many blessings bestowed upon this Assembly.



Church representatives who will serve on the LWF Council. © LWF/J. Latva-Hakuni

# Governing Bodies of The Lutheran World Federation

In accordance with current constitutional provisions, the LWF Eleventh Assembly in July 2010 voted amendments to the LWF Constitution. The LWF Council meeting immediately after the Assembly voted to amend the LWF Bylaws as well. Amendments to the LWF Constitution come into force one year after their adoption (LWF Constitution, Article XVI, Section 1). Thus the amendments adopted in Stuttgart come into force on 31 July 2011. This means that the decisions of the LWF Council at its meeting just after the Assembly were taken on the basis of the existing LWF Constitution and ByLaws. The one-year period before amendments come into force is a time of transition. This document, therefore, uses both the existing and the new wordings, with the new written in *italics*.

## THE ASSEMBLY (ART. VII.)

The highest decision-making body of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is the Assembly, normally held every six years. It consists of representatives from each member church. Among its many functions is the election of the President and the Council.

## THE COUNCIL (ART. VIII)

The Council shall be composed of the President, the Treasurer/the *Chairperson of the Finance Committee* and 48 members to be elected by the Assembly. It shall elect from among its members the Executive Committee/the *Meeting of Officers*, Program Committees and other ad-hoc subcommittees as required. For Program

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Committees, the Council elects for its term of office up to 21 advisers with voting rights in the committees. In view of the fact that the Council will finalize the appointment of the various committees at its meeting in 2011, the Council decided to extend the mandates and the membership of the Standing Committee for World Service and the LWF Project Committee for one more year until 2011, at which time all committees will be reviewed. There is a desire to reconfigure the Program and Standing Committees for World Service and hence the need to put in place transitory arrangements until the 2011 Council meeting.

This report therefore includes some actions taken at the post-Assembly Council.

## MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**Bishop Niels Henrik ARENDT**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark

**Ms Mami Brunah ARO SANDANIAINA**  
Malagasy Lutheran Church (Madagascar)

**Rev. Naoki ASANO**  
Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church

**Ms Iwona BARANIEC**  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland

**Rev. Martina BERLICH**  
Evangelical Church in Central Germany

**Dr Carlos G. BOCK**  
Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil

**Rev. Jenny CHAN**  
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong

**Ms Colleen Elizabeth CUNNINGHAM**  
Moravian Church in South Africa

**Rev. Dr Samuel DAWAI**  
Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon

**Ms Rani Bormon DIPTI**  
Bangladesh Lutheran Church

**Ms Danielle DOKMAN**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname

**Rev. Frauke EIBEN**  
North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church (Germany)

**Bishop Geza ERNIŠA**  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovenia

**Bishop Dr Tamás FABINY**  
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary

**Mr Warime GUTI**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea

**Bishop Mark S. HANSON**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Bishop Helga HAUGLAND BYFUGLIEN**  
Church of Norway

**Rev. Dr Wakseyoum IDOSA**  
The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

**Ms Maria IMMONEN**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

**Ms Christina JACKSON-SKELTON**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Bishop Antje JACKÉLEN**  
Church of Sweden

**Rev. Dr A. G. Augustine JEYAKUMAR**  
The Arcot Lutheran Church (India)

**Bishop Melvin JIMÉNEZ**  
Lutheran Costa Rican Church

**Bishop Susan JOHNSON**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

**Bishop Frank O. JULY**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg (Germany)

**Bishop Dr Zephania KAMEETA**  
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia

**Rev. Rainer KIEFER**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover (Germany)



**Bishop Miloš KLÁTIK**

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg  
Confession in the Slovak Republic

**Ms Eun-hae KWON**

Lutheran Church in Korea

**Ms Danielle C. LEKER**

Protestant Church in the Netherlands

**Bishop Oi-Peng (Philip) LOK**

Lutheran Church in Malaysia and  
Singapore

**Bishop Alex MALASUSA**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

**Rev. Dagmar MAGOLD**

Federation of Evangelical Lutheran  
Churches in Switzerland and in the  
Principality of Liechtenstein

**Ms Titi MALIK**

Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria

**Ms Mikka McCracken**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Dr Bernd OBERDORFER**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria  
(Germany)

**Ms Pamela Akinyi OYIEYO**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya

**Bishop Dr Ndanganane Petrus  
PHASWANA**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern  
Africa

**Ms Jenette A. PURBA**

The Indonesian Christian Church

**Rev. Dr Gloria ROJAS VARGAS**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile

**Bishop Dr Mangisi SIMORANGKIR**

Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia

**Ms Jenny SKUMSNES-MOE**

Church of Norway

**Ms Christina SOREN**

Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church  
(India)

**Rev. Dr Robin STEINKE**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Ms Magnea SVERRISDOTTIR**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland

**Ms Anna-Maria TETZLAFF**

Evangelical Church of Pomerania (Germany)

**Archbishop Jānis VANAGS**

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia

**Bishop Dr Munib A. YOUNAN**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan  
and the Holy Land

**Mr A. Elijah ZINA**

Lutheran Church in Liberia

**HONORARY MEMBERS  
OF THE COUNCIL**

**Rev. Dr Gottfried BRAKEMEIER**

Brazil

**Bishop em. Dr Christian KRAUSE**

Germany

**THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/  
MEETING OF OFFICERS**

The Executive Committee/*Meeting of Officers* is the appointing authority of staff with programmatic and supervisory responsibilities, with the exception of Cabinet members, who are appointed by the Council. The Executive Committee/*Meeting of Officers* serves as the LWF Board of Trustees and Personnel Committee.

The committee is composed of the President, Vice Presidents, the Treasurer/*Chairperson of the Finance Committee*, and the chairpersons of the Program Committees of the LWF Council including two members at large for gender and generational balance.

The President, Vice Presidents and Treasurer/*Chairperson of the Finance Committee* represent the seven LWF geographical regions defined as: Africa, Asia, Central Eastern Europe, Central Western Europe, Nordic Countries, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America.

With the new constitution, the President and Treasurer/*Chairperson of the Finance Committee* will be non-geographical.

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## **PRESIDENT**

**Bishop Dr Munib A. YOUNAN**  
Jerusalem [Asia]

## **VICE-PRESIDENTS**

**Bishop Alex MALASUSA**  
Tanzania [Africa]

**Ms Eun-hae KWON**  
Korea [Asia] (*elect-until July 2011*)

**Bishop Dr Tamás FABINY**  
Hungary [Central Eastern Europe]

**Bishop Frank O. JULY**  
Germany [Central Western Europe]

**Rev. Dr Gloria ROJAS VARGAS**  
Chile [Latin America and the Caribbean]

**Bishop Helga HAUGLAND  
BYFUGLIEN**  
Norway [Nordic Countries]

**Bishop Susan JOHNSON**  
Canada [North America] (*elect-until July 2011*)

## **TREASURER/CHAIRPERSON OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Ms Christina JACKSON-SKELTON**  
USA [North America] (*also Vice President of  
the North America Region until July 2011*)

## **MEMBERS AT LARGE**

Will be full members of the Executive Committee from July 31, 2011

**Ms Anna-Maria TETZLAFF**  
Germany

**Ms Colleen Elizabeth CUNNINGHAM**  
South Africa

Decision taken on the basis of the new Constitution which states that “*In addition the Council shall elect two members for the purpose of ensuring gender and generational representation*” (Article VIII, Section 4)

## **CHAIRPERSONS OF PROGRAM COMMITTEES**

(The following Vice-Presidents are appointed as Chairpersons of Program Committees for a period of one year until July 31, 2011 upon which the Council will appoint new members.)

**Bishop Dr Tamás FABINY**  
Hungary (Communication Services)

**Bishop Helga HAUGLAND BYFUGLIEN**  
Norway (Ecumenical Affairs)

**Ms Christina JACKSON-SKELTON**  
USA (Finance & Administration)

**Bishop Frank O. JULY**  
Germany (Theology and Studies)

**Ms Eun-hae KWON**  
Korea (World Service)

**Bishop Alex MALASUSA**  
Tanzania (Mission and Development)

**Rev. Dr Gloria ROJAS VARGAS**  
Chile (International Affairs and Human Rights)

## **PROGRAM COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNICATION SERVICES**

### *Members of the Council*

Bishop Dr Tamás FABINY, Hungary  
(chairperson)

Mr Warime GUTI, Papua New Guinea

Ms Danielle DOKMAN, Suriname

### *Advisers of the Council*

Still to be appointed

## **PROGRAM COMMITTEE FOR ECUMENICAL AFFAIRS**

### *Members of the Council*

Bishop Helga HAUGLAND  
BYFUGLIEN, Norway (chairperson)

Bishop Dr Ndanganane Petrus  
PHASWANA, South Africa

Rev. Naoki ASANO, Japan

Archbishop Jānis VANAGS, Latvia

Rev. Dagmar MAGOLD, Switzerland

Ms Anna-Maria TETZLAFF, Germany

Bishop Susan JOHNSON, Canada

### *Advisers of the Council*

Still to be appointed

## **PROGRAM COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION**

### *Members of the Council*

Ms Christina JACKSON-SKELTON,  
USA (chairperson)

Ms Pamela Akinyi OYIEYO, Kenya

Ms Jenette A. PURBA, Indonesia

### *Advisers of the Council*

Still to be appointed

## **PROGRAM COMMITTEE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS & HUMAN RIGHTS**

### *Members of the Council*

Rev. Dr Gloria ROJAS VARGAS, Chile  
(chairperson)

Bishop Dr Zephania KAMEETA, Namibia

Ms Danielle C. LEKER, Netherlands

Rev. Martina BERLICH, Germany

Ms Mikka McCracken, USA

Rev. Jenny CHAN, Hong Kong

### *Advisers of the Council*

Still to be appointed

## **PROGRAM COMMITTEE FOR MISSION & DEVELOPMENT**

### *Members of the Council*

Bishop Alex MALASUSA, Tanzania  
(chairperson)

Ms Mami Brunah ARO SANDANIAINA,  
Madagascar

Ms Colleen Elizabeth CUNNINGHAM,  
South Africa

Ms Christina SOREN, India

Bishop Dr Mangisi SIMORANGKIR,  
Indonesia

Dr Carlos G. BOCK, Brazil

Bishop Geza ERNIŠA, Slovenia

Rev. Frauke EIBEN, Germany

Ms Magnea SVERRISDOTTIR, Iceland

Bishop Niels Henrik ARENDT, Denmark

### *Advisers of the Council*

Still to be appointed

## **PROGRAM COMMITTEE FOR THEOLOGY & STUDIES**

### *Members of the Council*

Bishop Frank O. JULY, Germany (chairperson)

Bishop Oi-Peng (Philip) LOK, Malaysia

Bishop Miloš KLÁTIK, Slovak Republic

Prof. Dr Bernd OBERDORFER, Germany

Bishop Antje JACKÉLEN, wSweden

Rev. Dr Robin STEINKE, USA

Ms Iwona BARANIEC, Poland

### *Advisers of the Council*

Still to be appointed

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## **PROGRAM COMMITTEE FOR WORLD SERVICE**

### *Members of the Council*

Ms Eun-hae KWON, Korea (chairperson)

Bishop Mark S. HANSON, USA

Rev. Dr A.G. Augustine JEYAKUMAR,  
India

Rev. Dr Wakseyoum IDOSA, Ethiopia

Rev. Rainer KIEFER, Germany

Ms Maria IMMONEN, Finland

Ms Jenny SKUMSNES-MOE, Norway

Bishop Melvin JIMÉNEZ, Costa Rica

### *Advisers of the Council*

Still to be appointed

## **COUNCIL MEMBERS YET TO BE ASSIGNED TO THE PROGRAM COMMITTEES:**

Rev. Dr Samuel DAWAI, Cameroon

Ms Titi MALIK, Nigeria

Mr A. Elijah ZINA, Liberia

Ms Rani Bormon DIPTI, Bangladesh

## **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR CONSTITUTION**

### *Members of the Council*

Still to be appointed

## **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR MEMBERSHIP**

### *Members of the Council*

Still to be appointed

*(The mandates of the two committees listed below  
have been extended for one more year by the deci-  
sion of the Council to be reconfigured at the next  
meeting of the Council in 2011)*

## **THE LWF PROJECT COMMITTEE**

### *Members*

Rev. Rainer KIEFER, Germany (chairperson)

Mr Robert GRANKE, Canada

Ms Yeonli KIM, South Korea

Deaconess Esther C. MUSAH, Liberia

Ms Anne SKJELMERUD, Norway

Rev. Ilo UTECH, Nicaragua

Archbishop Jānis VANAGS, Latvia

## **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR WORLD SERVICE**

### *Members*

Rev. Dr A. G. Augustine JEYAKUMAR,  
India (chairperson)

Ms Brenda V. AKPAN, Nigeria

Mr Christer ÅKESSON, Sweden

Mr Volker GERDESMEIER, Germany

Mr Louis DORVILIER, USA

Bishop em. Dr Ambrose MOYO, Zimbabwe

Mr Peter SCHIRMER, Australia

Ms Marilu NÖRNBERG MENEZES,  
Brazil

Ms Pauliina PARHIALA, Finland

Dr Christian Friis BACH, Denmark



# List of Participants

In alphabetical order

## AANO, Kjetil

Delegate  
Church of Norway  
Norway

## AARSETH, Helge

Ex-Officio  
Church of Norway  
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## AARSETH, Elen Gilje

Accompanying Person  
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## ABBETMEIER, Anne

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## ABDELGHED, Tekhna Ashushai

Accompanying Person  
Eritrea

## ABDISA MULETA, Degitu

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Mekane Yesus  
Ethiopia

## ABOKA, Moses

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## ABROMEIT, Hans-Jürgen

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Germany

## ACHTELSTETTER, Karin

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## ADA, Jeannette

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## ADAM, Stefan

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Mekane Yesus  
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## ADORJÁNI, Dezső-Zoltán

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## ADRIAN, Dorothee

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## ALMQVIST, Ewa

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## ALONSO, Leonor

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## ANASCO HINOSTROZA, Cristina

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## ASONOV, Aleksandr

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## Appendices

### AUGOUSTINOS OF GERMANY

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Ecumenical Patriarchate  
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### AUNE, Bella

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Church of Sweden  
Sweden

### AUSTIN, Charles

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### AUVINEN, Juha

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Sanansaattajat/The Messengers  
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### BABBA, Nemuel

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### BACH, Sandra

Visitor  
Former LWF Staff  
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### BAECHER, Claude

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Mennonite World Conference  
France

### BAECHER, Elisabeth

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Mennonite World Conference  
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### BARNETT, Thomas

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Leone  
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### BARNETT-COWAN, Alyson

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### BENGSTON, Diane

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### BERGEN, Maria

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### BERGGREN, David

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### BERGGREN, Susan

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Association of Mennonite Congregations  
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and Other States  
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**BUCK, Gertrude**  
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**BYFUGLIE, Brita**  
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**CAMADDO, Maryssa**  
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**CASE-WINTERS, Anna**  
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**CHANDRASEKHAR, Samuel**  
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**CHEN, Shu-Chen (Selma)**  
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Taiwan

**COBO, Alfredo**  
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**CORTEZ RODRÍGUEZ, Victoria**  
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Faith and Hope  
Nicaragua

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Colombia  
Canada

**COSSA, Zelda Cristina**  
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Evangelical Lutheran Church in  
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Mozambique

**COVOLO, Catharina**  
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**ČULO, Michael**  
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Germany

**CUMMINGS, Janis**  
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**DA SILVA DIFENTHAELER, Sibeli**  
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**DALLA BARBA, Ricardo**  
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**DAUTHEVILLE, Joël**  
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France

**DAVID RAJU, Bejjam**  
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Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church  
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**DEFFENBAUGH, Miriam**  
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**DEGROOT-NESDAHL, Andrea**  
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USA

**DENECKE, Norbert**  
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LWF National Committee in Germany  
Germany

**DENEKE-STOLL, Dorothea**  
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**DEPAYSO, Diadem**  
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Lutheran Church in the Philippines  
Philippines

**DEUSS, Kathrin**  
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**DIAZ VELASQUEZ, Martin Ignacio**  
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eGenius IT-Service  
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World Communion of Reformed Churches  
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**DOKMAN, Daniëlle**  
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Suriname

**DOLACE, Liga**  
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LWF Endowment Fund Board  
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**DRIEDGER, Hanna**  
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**DRUVINA, Ilze**  
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Association of Lutheran Women  
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Kairos Europa  
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**ELDRID, Alan**

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Argentina

**ELENZANO, April Praise**

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**ELMBERG, Sten**

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Church of Sweden  
Sweden

**EPHRAIM SUWA, Christopher**

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Nigeria  
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**ERESO, Almaw Gari**

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Germany

**FELLMANN, Liselotte**

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**FIGUEROA TORRES, Rosa Elisa**

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## GUESTS

*are persons invited by the LWF to participate in the Assembly part of the time or full time, i.e. former LWF presidents, general secretaries, representatives from other faith communities, host church guests, officials of the government in the host country or international organizations (e.g. United Nations).*

*Normally, they have neither the right to speak nor to vote, except if requested to address the Assembly with a greeting or such. Former LWF presidents and general secretaries may be granted the right to speak during the entire Assembly.*

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*They have neither the right to speak nor to vote.*

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